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A

GOLDEN TREASURY FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD,

Whose Treasure is in Heaven;

CONSISTING

Of select Texts of the Bible, with practical Observations
in Prose and Verse, for every Day in the Year.

By C. H. v. BOGATZKY. K

WITH

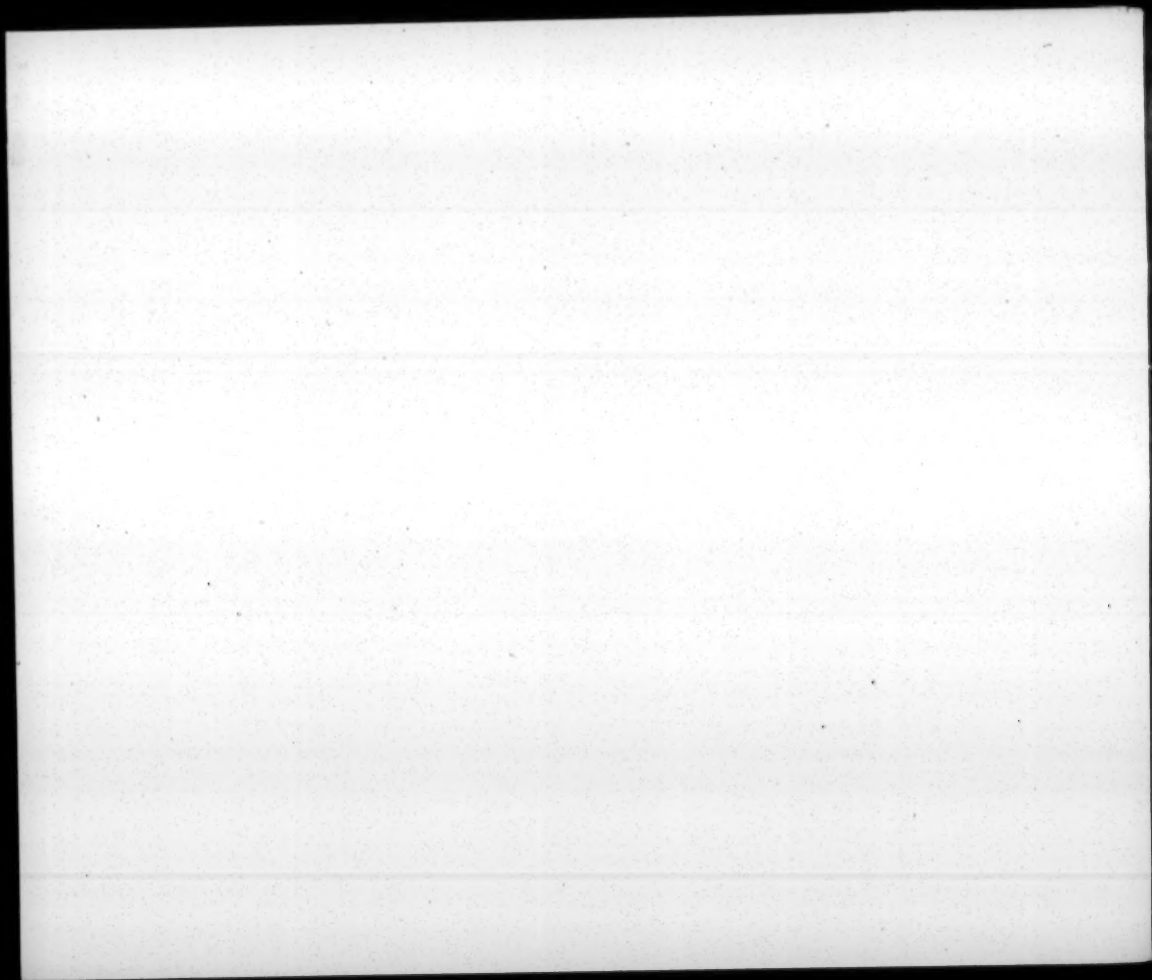
Some Alterations and Improvements by various Hands.

Also a PREFACE on the right Use of this Book.
Together with a few Forms of PRAYER for private Use.

Where your Treasure is, there will your heart be also, MATT. vi. 21.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year MDCCLXXV.



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P R E F A C E.

THE EDITOR thinks it incumbent upon him to inform the Reader, that several, both ancient and modern christians have contributed their quota towards enriching this TREASURY; that he has not stuck to any particular sect or party of christians, but wherever he found a passage among the old authors, striking, instructive, or encouraging to the people of God, he inserted it with great pleasure, and applied to friends for their illustration of particular points in divinity, which he thought were more immediately necessary for the information of common readers; not points of speculation, or doubtful interpretation, but what all allow are essential to the christian religion; such as FAITH, REPENTANCE, HOLINESS, &c. and they readily favoured him with their sentiments, prompted, he doubts not, with

with the same generous motive he himself is actuated by, "the edification of the CHILDREN of GOD. He is nevertheless aware that there are many who discover an excellent spirit and lively zeal, yet confine their regards to a few principles, which however important, are not the whole of Christianity, but want some other articles to guard them.—Knowledge and practice, he is persuaded, must go hand in hand together.

THE edification of christians in general, and of every reader in particular, is the professed design of this publication. The grace of GOD forming the heart for GOD, is the LORD's work; "the new creature" is his workmanship, "created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works." The foundation of the spiritual building is laid in CHRIST; on this foundation the christian builds; in building upon their most holy faith, christians will have their eye upon the Master-builder; will keep to the plan of the work, to the plan of the christian life, as drawn and set by JESUS; and will be daily asking and receiving directions and materials for carrying on the work. In this good work they

P R E F A C E.

v

they meet with many impediments, arising from self, the world, and the great enemy to religion, Satan; and at times are apt to be discouraged; as the Jews were often opposed and retarded in the building of the temple by the subtilty and power of those who hated them; happy when the work was going on pleasantly; sad and cast down when it was otherwise. So when the good work in the soul is advancing, and there is a growth in the spiritual divine life, then are they glad and revive; when the work is more at a stand, when many things concur to impede the progress of religion in the soul, when the mind is disturbed with the remains of corruption, and power of unbelief, when avocations from that enemy, the world, divert the attention from the work, when the LORD seemeth to have forgotten, and to hide his face, and dark dispensations of providence perplex and disquiet the weak mind, when the frail body is bowed down with trouble, and the spirit is faint and languid, how sad and sorrowful the case!

READER, How is this work going on with you? Have you the same life and spirit you once had? or are you more feeble-minded?

Is a spirit of languor and deadness creeping upon you? Are you bewailing the want of that sweet experience of the power and presence of God you once had? Are you, like Job, crying out, "O that I were as in months past, when the candle of the LORD shined upon me! Wilt thou not revive, wilt thou not enlighten my darkness?" If this is your complaint, go to the throne of grace; go often to the living stone, that you, as a lively stone in the building, may be built up in faith, love, and joy. Your enemies are many, are subtil, are strong, but they shall not prevail; your Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is his name; he shall arise, and thoroughly plead your cause, and give you rest.

IN the primitive Church, upon the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, how amiable the spirit of love to CHRIST and his truths, of warm unaffected devotion, of union, concord, and brotherly love, among themselves! "They were all of one heart and of one soul."

At the Reformation from Popery, how warm and bold the zeal of the venerable reformers, in contending for and promoting the pure doctrines of the gospel! How wonderful their success under the countenance of the Most High? And in latter times, how have we seen religion revive in some places, while it was remarkably declining in others? When purity of faith and purity in practice prevail in any church, there God is glorified, there is true christianity: When instruments are raised up, who have a hearty love to the work, it goes on pleasantly and prospers; when the friends of JESUS are many, are zealous and active, and harmoniously unite together in promoting the interests of his kingdom, how does the glorious design succeed! "The whole body united to the head, and fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying itself in love." On the other hand, when the truths of JESUS are denied, are darkened and obscured; when the spirit of infidelity and error makes progress; when there is a general spirit of dissipation, and profligacy of manners; when the enemies of

JESUS increase, and carry on their attacks with some success, what a stop is put to the glorious work, how is its progress retarded ! When there is a general languor and formality in matters religious ; when there is a warmer zeal for things of doubtful disputation, than for the great and substantial interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, how does vital christianity decay ! When instead of loving one another with a pure heart, fervently, and uniting in promoting the great cause against the common enemy, there is a spirit of party and dissention even amongst professed friends, how much does the work suffer, and how do the enemies triumph ! Satan's watch-word is, Divide and devour ; if once he can separate us from the fold, and withdraw us from the Shepherd's tents, his work is half done. CHRIST'S watch-word is, Unite and conquer : the path of duty is the path of safety. Surely this will lead all the true servants of God to frequent and fervent prayer ; " O Lord revive, in wrath remember mercy, heal our breaches, forgive our animosities, and unite us in the bands of love and affection, that our arms may be strong, and the pleasure of the LORD prosper in our hands."

THAT

THAT this book may be better understood, and a means of edifying every reader, let the following remarks be particularly attended to.

1. THE *petitions* and the *divine answers*, which are to be found among several of the scripture texts in the titles, may be of admirable use to many; the Questions generally run in the complaining, inquisitive strain, for information and redress, under the painful anxieties of a wounded conscience; and the Answers are well calculated to relieve and inform the distressed soul; they generally consist of gracious promises of scripture; which may easily be turned into petitions; and if relief does not immediately come, yet the soul gets ease, by thus pouring out its complaints, and reminding the LORD of his promises; faith in the word is hereby strengthened, and the soul is led to see, that trouble and anxiety are to precede rejoicing and triumph.

2. THE distinction that is made in several parts of the book between bare morality and true christianity, respecting the motives of actions, the principle from which they are done, and the degree and extent of them,

them. Morality is not christianity, though there can be no true christianity without morality; moral actions may be done from natural principles, and will certainly center in self, in some shape or other; but a truly christian act must proceed from a gracious principle in the heart. A moral man, and a true christian, may both give something to the poor; the poor is relieved by each; but the benevolence of the one may proceed from a natural generosity of spirit, while that of the other comes from a sense of divine favour and bounty already bestowed upon himself. They may both join in the same ordinances, pray to the same supreme Being, and yet the one continue self-righteous and vainly confident, while the other is humbled, and lives upon divine grace; the principle within makes the difference between them; and they whose religion is only moral, would do well to consider the difference.

3. In almost every page there are different portions of scripture put together, which serve to elucidate and explain each other; so that what in one is obscure, is generally opened by its parallel, which will
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be found very useful, if diligently compared ; and serve to shew the abundance, the super-abundance of light, promises, privileges, and advantages there are in the word of God, and how they become “ profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work ; and through the divine blessing upon him, be “ made wise unto salvation.”

4. LET the reader be careful to distinguish between a state of safety by faith in CHRIST, and a state of assurance arising from sensible comforts in the heart. The best of christians experience great vicissitudes respecting the frame of their minds ; sometimes they are lively and comfortable, then they are low and depressed ; now they have sensible tokens of divine favour, then again these are withdrawn, and they begin to question the safety of their state before God : The enemy often takes advantage of their uncomfortable frames, and would have them question the reality of grace in their heart, and the consequence generally is great anxiety and distress. In order to remove this, it is necessary

necessary to consider what is the true foundation of hope, and to distinguish between what is permanent and durable, and what is fluctuating and changeable.

THE work of the Redeemer is a perfect work, incapable of addition or diminution, everlasting in its duration and efficacy; upon this the eye of faith should be invariably fixed, and from hence comfort and support in every state is to be drawn: CHRIST's blood is a constant propitiation, his righteousness is a perfect covering; to these, Reader, have daily recourse for cleansing and recommendation before God; by these you may silence all the accusations of Satan, all the clamours of conscience; all the threatenings of the law; for in CHRIST the believer is complete, and here may he safely rest in his dullest and heaviest moments: happy frames, on the contrary, are bestowed or withheld, as it pleases God; you may safely pray for them, because great peace is promised to the children of God; and, generally speaking, the diligent and watchful are most frequently favoured with them; and when you are blessed with them, be thankful; but beware of depending
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upon them, for this is the readiest way to have them withdrawn : spiritual pride *may* arise from this quarter, while a feeling sense of weakness and unworthiness keeps the soul humble and continually dependent upon the Lord JESUS CHRIST alone for pardon, strength and salvation.

5. IN spiritual conflicts it will often happen when God is about to work some great deliverance from some particular sin, or pressing temptation, that previous to his deliverance, the believer will think he had never been so wicked or oppressed before ; his corruptions are permitted to stir up in him, and he is apt to say with Moses, respecting the Israelites, that " God has not delivered him at all." Reader, beware of such a conclusion ; the greatest darkness is generally a little before sun-rise ; " the Israelites groaned by reason of their task-masters, and " heavy burdens," just when God was about to deliver them : man's extremity ; is God's opportunity out of darkness he brings forth light ; of unbelief, faith ; of pride, humility ; his design is to bring down thy self-righteousness and vain confidence ; to cut the very sinews of an arm
of

of flesh; to convince thee that deliverance is of himself alone; to bring thee to a steady dependence upon his power, that his strength may be perfected in thy weakness, and that he may have all the glory: Then will he appear for thee, and work wonderfully; and in all thy after-conflicts of a spiritual kind, follow this advice, build not thy comfort of pardon upon thy victory, but thy victory upon thy pardon, and acceptance with God through CHRIST: strive not, thinking that thou shalt only have remission of sin when conquered, but seek first remission, and believe that it is forgiven through CHRIST. Being assured of this, strive in faith against sins already forgiven, against enemies already conquered; look on thyself as not only accepted with God through CHRIST, but even in league and covenant with him against all thine enemies; and by these means thou hast, even in the contest, peace, courage, strength and victory.

6. IN this book are several parts of scripture-history evangelized, or applied to spiritual purposes in a gospel way; which may serve as specimens for the improving of many more to the same end; hereby
great

great advantages will arise to the intelligent reader. "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon." The command to drive out the Canaanites; and if not, their becoming pricks in the eyes of the Israelites, &c. the achievements of the Jews in their wars, the interpositions of providence in their behalf; their departing from God, and his selling them into the hands of their enemies; their groanings under captivity and oppression; the rage and malice of their adversaries, &c. afford ample matter of caution and instruction to every serious reader; all may be easily brought home and spiritualized; and will teach him to admire free grace; the tokens of divine favour, will warn him of the power of his enemies, will shew him the danger of sin and corruption, and the necessity of keeping close to the Captain of his salvation from day to day.

LASTLY, dear Reader, beware of formality in the use of this book: it will be of little service barely to read it over; see that these truths be brought home to thy conscience, and beg of the Almighty, that he would be pleased to apply them by his holy Spirit; then they will be

bleſſed indeed to thy ſoul : examine your experience as you go along; particularly how you hate and fight againſt ſin ; how you maintain communion with God through the Spirit, what it is to live by faith in CHRIST JESUS ; which are ſubjects much inſiſted on in this work ; and in the knowledge and experience of which conſiſts the greateſt part of a chriſtian's happineſs ; ſee if your graces are lively and vigorous, if they are kept in exerciſe ; the kingdom of heaven is a growing kingdom, the ſeed of grace muſt bring forth fruit.

MAY the LORD our GOD, who at the building of the material temple of Jeruſalem did not deſpiſe the leaſt ſervice or contribution, graciously accept, in CHRIST, of this feeble labour of love towards building up this ſpiritual temple, and continue to bleſs it richly in the edification of gracious ſouls, to the glory of his name, and for the ſake of his eternal love. Amen

23 JY 60

1 JAN.

(1)

— **HOSANNA** — MARK xi. 9.

A NEW scene of time now begins; put up thy Hosanna, O my soul, that the Lord may save, bless and prosper thee; may he grant thee a happy new year indeed! For this purpose begin it with a dedication of thyself to God; thy time, circumstances and life are in his hands, implore his blessing and protection over thee this ensuing year. Begin this and every following day with prayer; let God have thy first thoughts in the morning, the impression they make will not easily be erased by worldly matters. Grace is promised in the use of means; be thou diligent then and punctual in the performance of them; let thy daily request be for an increasing knowledge of thyself, and of JESUS CHRIST in his offices; for a sense of pardoning mercy; for a lively vigorous faith; for communion with the Father and the Son through the Spirit; for true holiness in heart and life; for strength and protection against thy spiritual foes, and for persevering grace to hold out to the end. Pray for the prosperity of Zion, they prosper that love her; for thy friends and relations, begging the Almighty to take them into a covenant relation to himself; for a blessing on thy worldly affairs; for a sanctified use of health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, as GOD shall please to send. Perhaps, O my soul, this may be the last year of thy probation: Is thy state safe? Art thou a real believer in JESUS? Is the oil of grace in thy vessel? If so, thou art prepared for every emergency.

And now, my soul, another year
Of thy short life is past;
I cannot long continue here,
And this may be my last.

Now a new scene of time begins,
Set out afresh for heav'n;
Seek pardon for thy daily sins,
In CHRIST so freely giv'n.

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B

2 JAN.

(2)

I Will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O Death, I will be thy plague! O Grave, I will be thy destruction! Hos. xiii. 14. CHRIST having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it, COL. ii. 15.

THE world is afraid of a hidden poison where there is none. The real hidden poison is sin, which the LORD grant me to fear every where; for it has infected all things and all places. But, O my dear Saviour, thou being my all-sufficient Preservative and Antidote in all places, O! dwell in me continually, and increase thou my faith, that I may know thee and enjoy thee more and more. Take away all slavish fear of death and hell from my soul, for thou hast conquered both for me.

Hosanna to the Prince of light,
That cloth'd himself in clay;
Enter'd the iron gates of death,
And tore the bars away.
Death is no more the king of dread,
Since our IMMANUEL rose;

He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.
Now holy triumphs of the soul
Shall death itself outbrave,
Leave dull mortality behind,
And fly beyond the grave.

3 JAN.

(3)

BUT now, O LORD, thou art our Father : We are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand, ISA. lxiv. 8.

BEING only clay in thy hands, O LORD, as I must not, so would I not resist thy workings by any means, I assuredly believe that thou wilt prepare and perfect me for a meet vessel of grace, in spite of a thousand hindrances. No work of thine comes ever short of its intended perfection : For who can stay thy hand ? It is thy own saying ; " I will work, and who shall let it ? " ISA. xliii. 13.

An Artist delights in his own workmanship, and would not leave one single flaw or defect in it designedly, PHIL. i. 6. O ! then look upon me too, thou wise Creator ; see how flesh and blood disorder my poor soul ; and deliver me from all that may endanger my spiritual life. Knowing thou canst do no less than an human artist, who is ever ready and exerts his skill to mend and perfect his work ; I trust that thou wilt not always suffer these impediments to hinder and disgrace thy work. Nay, such is thy wisdom and power, that out of darkness thou canst bring light, out of sickness health ; and though I am now destitute of strength and life ; yet I believe thy work will be finished at last, and glorify the name of its maker, 1 PET. v. 10.

Finish, LORD, thy new creation,
Pure, unspotted may we be,
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restor'd by thee,

Chang'd from glory into glory,
Till in heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

O *That the Salvation of Israel were come out of Zion ! When the LORD brings back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad, PSAI. xiv 7.—Divine answer. If the Son make you free, then you are free indeed, JOHN viii. 36. See also verses 31, 32.*

NOT as if sin should be utterly destroyed, or intirely dead, and could not stir any more in the heart of believers. For the scripture speaks of them as having still the lusts and motions of sin, GAL. v. 13. But it imports only, that it has no power either to condemn, or to reign over us, nay it shall be weakened more and more, ROM. vi. 12, 14. So that CHRIST reigns in the heart even where sin dwells, in the midst of his enemies ; and it is a dangerous error indeed to believe that sin is destroyed in the root. If it were so, whence those frequent expressions and exhortations, to crucify, withstand, and rule over it ? GAL. v. 24.

Now sits our Saviour on his throne,
With pity in his eyes :
He hears the dying pris'ners groane,
And sees their sighs arise.
He frees the souls condemn'd to death ;
And when his saints complain,

It shan't be said, that praying breath
Was ever spent in vain.
This shall be known when we are dead,
And left on long record,
That ages yet unborn may read,
And trust and praise the LORD.

5 JAN.

(5)

ALL that will live godly (Note) in CHRIST JESUS (for bare morality the world likes well enough :) shall suffer persecution, 2 TIM. iii. 12. The world hates them, because they are not of the world, JOHN xvii. 14.

THE children of GOD do not love and please the world, and are oftentimes greatly afflicted on account of the abounding wickedness, and particularly the profanation of the LORD's Name. Now when you can like the world, and the world can like you, there must be much worldliness in you : for the world loves its own.

Many pretend to be Christians, but they will not endure persecution. Instead of this, they blame others for too much rashness, and not acting prudently enough, to avoid the mockings and hatred of the world. Therefore they propose to take wiser measures ; and to do more good, take great care not to be despised and rejected. But under this pretence of wisdom and prudence, very often lies concealed a most abominable love and fear of men. Be thou nobler-minded, live as a Christian indeed, and be not ashamed to bear the cross of CHRIST. " The disciple is not above his master." Has eternal love, wisdom, and power, endured the contradiction and reproach of sinners? Thou shouldst be wiser than him indeed, if thou couldst escape the reproach and hatred of the world.

May but his grace my soul renew,
Let sinners gaze and hate me too !

| The Word that saves me does engage
A sure defence from all their rage,

6 JAN.

(6)

ALL things are possible to him that believeth, MARK ix. 23.

FAITH is the most essential part, the eye and the very light of the eye in the christian religion: the whole turns upon that. As our faith is, so is our strength and fruitfulness in good works. But at the same time there is nothing more out of our own power than to believe, even after the work of grace has been actually wrought in our hearts. Therefore nothing more needful than to pray for faith as long as we live. May the LORD give and increase it continually!

Nothing can be stronger in the universe than the hand of faith. By this we lay sure hold on our most glorious and almighty LORD in heaven, and such an inviolable union is established between CHRIST and a believing soul, that none can separate the one from the other, all the powers of hell and sin avail nothing against it. Faith breaks through the greatest obstacles, removes mountains of difficulties, and has, as it were, a kind of omnipotence in it. "For this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith," 1 JOHN v. 4. Nay, it even wrestles with GOD and prevails, GEN. xxxii. 28. As straw cannot withstand the force of fire; so GOD being a wall of fire around his people, the greatest power of our mighty enemies shall be consumed, like the stubble. O! then look upon him stedfastly, my soul, and believe in him with a simple heart. Wondrous are his ways with his people, and past finding out; but at last all their sorrows and strife, by the management of his infinite wisdom, must come to a glorious and triumphant end.

O let us go from strength to strength,
From grace to greater grace;

| From one degree of faith to more,
Till we behold thy face.

7 JAN.

(7)

CHRIST is all in all, COL. iii. 2.

FOR a believer to receive and know CHRIST as his all, is the only means to live truly a life of faith; and when he has done this, it will not be hard to resign all other things. To talk much of CHRIST, and make frequent use of his name one to another, is commendable, if the heart goes along with the words; but to call upon God the Father with a filial confidence, is also our duty, and does not contradict the apostle's meaning at all, for it is only through CHRIST we can do it; and as he says himself, the Father and He are one. Thou art my all, O gracious LORD! what then can I want? I desire no more than to be put always in mind of this by the animating voice of thy Spirit.

My LORD, my life, my love,
To thee, to thee I call;
I cannot live, if thou remove,
For thou art all in all.

Thy shining grace can cheer
This dungeon where I dwell:
'Tis paradise when thou art here;
If thou depart, 'tis hell.

The smilings of thy face,
How lovely, LORD, they are!

'Tis heav'n to rest in thine embrace,
And no where else but there.

Nor earth, nor all the sky,
Can one delight afford;
No, not a drop of real joy,
Without thy presence, LORD.

To thee my spirits fly
With fulness of desire:
And yet, how far from thee I lie!
Dear JESUS, raise me higher.

8 JAN.

(8)

THEY being ignorant of GOD's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of GOD. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed. For GOD hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, ROM. x. 3, 10, 11. and xi. 32.

OBSERVE this capital text, which condemns all works, and human righteousness, and proposes faith as the only means of obtaining the mercy of GOD. But the Heathens and Unconverted, and some grave and specious Christians, have much righteousness of their own, which proves their hindrance in faith, and in the righteousness of CHRIST; for though they imagine themselves to be relying upon it in faith, it is only imagination, since in fact they rely upon this or that, upon external worship, alms, and the like. And though some of them be wicked, they look upon others as worse, and have still a righteousness of their own. Now he who desires to be justified and saved by faith in CHRIST, must penitently and sorrowfully consider himself as unrighteous and wicked, be divested of all his own righteousness, hunger and thirst after the righteousness of CHRIST, be covered with it in faith, call upon the name of the LORD, and depend upon the mercy of GOD alone; so will he be justified, saved, and not be ashamed.

JESU ! thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head,

Bold shall I stand in the great day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay ?
Fully through these absolv'd I am,
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame,

I Cried with my whole heart, hear me, O LORD, I will keep thy statutes. Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies, for all my ways are before thee. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments, PSALM CXIX. 145, 165, 168, 176.

THE word of GOD should be ever connected with prayer; for why is it that many hear and read, without being the better? They do not pray in faith for a blessing. We must, like David, pray with the utmost fervor that we may understand and retain the word of GOD, and bring forth fruit; for a Christian has nothing so much at heart, as that he may always act up to the word and will of GOD; his prayer is, LORD, let my footsteps be sure, according to thy word, and let nothing contrary to thy law have dominion over me, either in my doctrine or practice. If this prayer be granted, great will be our peace; for the word of GOD is a word of peace; JESUS himself will be our peace, and then nothing shall offend us: we shall take heed unto all our ways before GOD, and so walk before him, as to continue humble, like David, who considered himself as a straying and lost sheep. LORD, we are by nature straying and lost sheep, seek and fetch us back from the error of our ways, and preserve us in thy pasture.

My soul hath gone too far astray,
My feet too often slip;

Yet since I've not forgot thy way,
Restore thy wand'ring sheep,

10 JAN.

(10)

I *Have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!* GEN. xlix. 18.

MANY have received comfort from these words in death, and waited in faith for their salvation. The thoughtless and impenitent wait only for temporal prosperity in their lives, and therefore cannot expect eternal bliss, but on the contrary a dreadful judgment after death. O that they would enter into themselves this very day, that at the eve of life they might, like Jacob and Simeon, depart in peace. We will not therefore look for any earthly things, but for the Saviour, who is already come, who will grant us his salvation, his aid and deliverance in life and death, and will conduct us safely at last, though we should wait some time for his help. Yes, my Redeemer, they who wait, depend upon, and hope in thee, shall not be ashamed; grant us only faith and patience, that we may wait on thee from one morning-watch to another; and enduring all things, make the whole course of our lives one perpetual expectation of thy aid; and may we ever abundantly experience thy help and salvation, especially at our latter end.

CHRIST'S own soft hand shall wipe the tears
From ev'ry weeping eye,
And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
And death itself shall die.

How long, dear Saviour, O how long
Shall this bright hour delay?
Fly swiftly round, ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day.

FOR GOD so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For GOD sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned, JOHN iii. 16—18.

OH that these truly precious words were ever warmly impressed on our hearts; that they were our last thoughts at night, and the first at our awaking in the morning; and that by this means they were improved in such a manner, as to make our dying bed easy in the evening of our life, and to insure our rising with gladness in the morning of the resurrection. And what more blessed and delightful meditations can I daily dwell upon, than to think thus: GOD has loved me, even me, when I was his enemy, and so loved me, that he gave me his only Son. Now he is mine indeed, and all things are mine, 1 COR. iii. 21. For he has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; and, being thus reconciled to him, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ROM. viii. 32. He will never suffer me to perish. He passed his word for it. It is he that says that "I shall not perish; I shall not be condemned," but have everlasting life, if I believe. This will I build and depend upon to my last moments, as upon an immoveable rock. Amen, and Amen.

O! for this love let earth and skies
With hallelujahs ring;

And the full choir of human tongues
All hallelujahs sing.

IN CHRIST we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, COL. i. 14. Having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross, COL. ii. 13, 14. Therefore, said he, It is finished, JOHN xix. 30.

ARE these the true sayings of GOD? Then, O my soul, thou hast a sure foundation to go upon; let it be thy constant care firmly to depend upon these, and such like blessed declarations; look to JESUS for every blessing thou standest in need of: Has CHRIST brought life and immortality to light? then look unto him and live: Is there redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins? then throw all thy guilt upon his atonement: Has he blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against thee? Then shake off self-righteous dependencies, and legal fears also. Did he die for thy sins? Then let his goodness and love lead thee to unfeigned repentance; let the sense of thy sins break thine heart, but encourage thy hope in the gospel.

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But CHRIST, the heav'nly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

13 JAN.

(13)

KEEP me as the apple of thine eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
PSAL. xvii. 8.—Divine answer. *He shall cover thee with his feathers,
and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler,*
PSAL. xci. 4.

THERE is none, O LORD! that has more need continually to keep close to thee in prayer and faith; and at the same time none is more unable to do it than I, the least of all thy flock. O! that thou wouldst be graciously pleased to incline and enable me to this blessed work; and grant that thy good Spirit, according to his own pleasure, may never suffer me to be faint and backward in the same. Forasmuch as I truly rest my faith under the wings of thy grace, I am sure of defence, power and comfort; but as soon as I wander from thee, I am in danger of losing the comfortable sense of these privileges, and falling into various errors and perplexities. "Guide me, O LORD, by thy counsel in
"this world, and at last receive me into glory." Amen.

He that has made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode;
Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
And there at night shall rest his head.

Just as a hen protects her brood
From birds of prey that seek their blood,
Under her feathers; so the LORD
Makes his own arm his people's guard,

Thrice happy man! thy maker's care
Shall keep thee from the fowler's snare,
Satan the fowler, who betrays
Unguarded souls a thousand ways.

What though a thousand at thy side,
At thy right hand ten thousand dy'd,
Thy God his chosen people saves
Amongst the dead, amidst the graves.

14 JAN.

(14)

FROM that time JESUS began to preach, and to say, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,* MATT. iv. 17.

THE kingdom of heaven appertains to those who repent. And the first mark of repentance is poverty of spirit; whence JESUS saith, chap. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." John preached repentance; JESUS preaches it here, and so did his apostles afterward. Thus true repentance is necessary for all; and the beginning of it is to acknowledge ourselves poor miserable sinners, depraved by nature, and so totally void of any righteousness or worth of our own; to confess our nakedness, to drop all the fig-leaves of vain excuses and false comforts, to lay open our poverty, our wants before GOD, to accuse ourselves, and plead guilty of all our sins, but seek mercy from CHRIST. If we do this we are blessed, and the kingdom of heaven is ours. This poverty of spirit is both the first and last foundation laid in the heart; for the faithful are more and more grounded in poverty of spirit, the nearer they approach to their consummation.

Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the regions peace:
No wanton lips, nor envious eye,
Can see or taste the bliss.

These holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admittance there,
But followers of the Lamb.

15 JAN.

(15)

PRAY without ceasing, 1 THESS. v. 17.

IF we have not grace enough, it is because we do not pray enough. For most true it is, we need not strive to move GOD to compassion, and extort, as it were, the blessings from him by our prayers. Very far from it. He is every minute communicating himself to us; in every word he holds forth CHRIST and every good thing to us: But we must always have a soul hungering after CHRIST, and by incessant prayer stretch out the hand of faith to receive him. This is chiefly to be understood of the inward desires and groanings of our spirit; but we must not omit to pour out our supplications daily, as oft as we can, by words, else our secret mental prayers at last may become so secret, as to cease perhaps entirely.

Father, in the mighty name
Of thy well-beloved Son,
One of all thy gifts I claim,
All my wants I speak in one;
Let me for the promise stay,
Only give me power to pray.

Grant me comfort, or deny,
Visit, or from me depart,
Only let thy Spirit cry
Abba Father in my heart;
Alba Father would I say,
Only give me power to pray.

16 JAN.

(16)

ABIDE in me, JOHN xv. 4. LORD, to whom shall we go, thou
hast the words of eternal life, JOHN vi. 68. For, it is good for me
to draw near to GOD. I have put my trust in the LORD GOD, PSALM
lxxiii. 28.

To abide in CHRIST, who is our righteousness and strength, and not
to be moved from him, is the very life and power of christianity;
for to know him to be our righteousness, brings peace and joy; which
joy in the LORD is certainly followed with strength to overcome sin
and the world. which believers renounce the more readily, as they
have found something better in CHRIST. May the LORD give me grace
likewise immoveably to abide in him.

CHRIST is my light, my life, my care,
My blessed hope, my heav'nly prize;
Dearer than all my passions are,
My limbs, my bowels, or my eyes.

The strings that twine about my heart,
Tortures and racks may tear them off;
But they can never, never part,
With their dear hold of CHRIST my love.

My God! and can a humble child,
That loves thee with a flame so high,
Be ever from thy face exil'd,
Without the pity of thine eye!

Impossible! for thine own hands
Have ty'd my heart so fast to thee;
And in thy book the promise stands,
That where thou art, thy friends must be.

17 JAN.

(17)

CHRIST has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, GAL. iii. 13, 14.

THE Spirit of sanctification is the gift of **CHRIST**. Consequently there is a great difference between moral actions done by our own strength, and true sanctification of the Spirit. The latter cannot take place before the soul truly receives **CHRIST**, and abides in him as its only propitiation, righteousness, and peace ; for he being first made to us of **GOD** our righteousness, will then be made our sanctification likewise, 1 COR. i. 30. And the kingdom, work, and image of **GOD**, will go on best when we trust least to our own strength ; sanctification is now become a more easy task, and we need not be compelled to it by the terrors of the law, since **CHRIST** lives and works in us, and we in a child-like temper live henceforth to him who died for us.

The law commands and makes us know
What duties to our **GOD** we owe ;
But 'tis the gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do his will.

The law discovers guilt and sin,
And shews how vile our hearts have been ;
Only the gospel can express
Forgiving love, and cleansing grace.

C

18 JAN.

(18)

CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes,
ROM. x. 4.

WHEN the law by its spirituality has condemned all our works and doings, convinced us of our weakness, and slain us, it has done its work ; and has no further business, but to be our schoolmaster, to bring us unto CHRIST ; and being in him, the law has no demands upon us any more, considered as a covenant of works, seeing we have a perfect righteousness, every way commensurate to the full demands of the law, even the righteousness of CHRIST ; and so he is the end of the law for a justifying righteousness, which is made ours by believing ; in this sense we are dead to the law, and it is dead to us ; but as a rule of duty we establish it, and ought to have an unfeigned respect to all its divine commands, as a proof of our sincerity before God.

LORD, when my thoughts with wonder roll
O'er the sharp sorrows of my soul,
And read my Maker's broken laws,
Repair'd and honour'd by thy cross ;

When I behold death, hell and sin,
Vanquish'd by that dear blood of thine ;
And see the Man that groan'd and dy'd
Sit glorious by his Father's side,

My passions rise and soar above,
I'm wing'd with faith, and fir'd with love ;
Fain would I reach eternal things
And learn the notes that Gabriel sings.

But my heart fails, my tongue complains,
For want of their immortal strains ;
And in such humble notes as these
Must fall below thy victories.

BUT the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto Noah into the ark. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in to him into the ark, GEN. viii. 9.

MANY, on their first awakening from sin, apply themselves to very hard works and rigorous duties, thereby expecting to find rest for their wounded consciences. But, though the right and diligent use of all the means of grace is absolutely required, yet great care must be taken not to quiet ourselves by that only. We should not place any confidence at all in our own doings, but only look for rest through the work of the redemption, and the blood of CHRIST. To know ourselves entirely justified by him, would soon fill our hearts with peace, nay, encourage and enable us to do good works, 2 CHRON. xvii. 6.

In vain the trembling conscience seeks
Some solid ground for rest,
With long despair the spirit breaks,
Till we apply to CHRIST.

Just as we see the lonesom dove
Bemoan her widow'd state,
Wand'ring she flies thro' all the grove,
And mourns her loving mate.

Just so our thoughts from thing to thing
In restless circles rove;
Just so we droop and hang the wing,
When JESUS hides his love.

While JESUS shines with quick'ning grace,
We sing and mount on high;
But if a frown becloud his face,
We faint, and tire, and die.

BY this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another, JOHN xiii. 35. Forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath; but be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you, EPH. iv. 2, 3, 26, 32.

HUMBLE christians never affect singularity, nor pretend to have the preference one of another; they rather study to be of one mind, strive not about words, lest the general harmony subsisting between them, and the edification of souls, should be hindered. Whoever judges and blames every thing, and can never agree in words and notions, or join in devotion with other experienced christians, is puffed up with self-conceit, and is in the way to make a dangerous shipwreck; for “pride comes before a fall.”

Nor diff'rent food, nor diff'rent dress,
 Compose the kingdom of our LORD;
 But peace, and joy, and righteousness,
 Faith, and obedience to his word.
 When weaker christians we despise,
 We do the gospel mighty wrong;

For GOD the gracious and the wise,
 Receives the feeble with the strong.
 Let pride and wrath be banish'd hence,
 Meekness and love our souls pursue:
 Nor shall our practice give offence
 To saints, the Gentile or the Jew.

21 JAN.

(21)

WHILE the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, MATT.
XXV. 10.

O THAT I may be roused out of my slumber, and be watchful, and ready against the coming of my Bridegroom! How many are there that set out in good earnest in their way to heaven, and run well for some time, but at last are lulled to rest, and entangled again with a false notion of liberty! even the wise virgins fall asleep. Let this be a warning to me; O LORD! set thou a guard before my eyes, ears, and other faculties, lest the world should again enter through these avenues of the heart: if the spark be not speedily extinguished, it will soon break out into a flame: thus sin is of a progressive nature, and its venom spreads quickly and very wide, unless it be stopped and opposed in time. Watch therefore over this unsteady heart of mine, O thou keeper of Israel! that as soon as it begins to wander from thee, I may be alarmed to flee from sin as from a serpent. Give me grace to look upon every hour as my last, so that being ever wisely upon my guard, I may meet thee with joy, when my time is run out, whenever it shall please thee to call me hence.

The fearful soul that tires and faints,
And walks the ways of God no more,
Is but esteem'd almost a saint,
And makes his own destruction sure.

LORD, let not all my hopes be vain,
Create my heart entirely new;
Which hypocrites could ne'er attain,
Which false apostates never knew.

BUT *while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat,*
 MATT. xiii. 25.

No wonder that christians lose their power and strength, if the enemy of souls find them asleep. How soon may he gain an advantage from without, if a strict guard is not kept within! Though Satan seems to sleep sometimes, and we should by all appearance be in no great danger, it is only his stratagem to make us careless. He never fails to be vigilant; and watch his opportunity that he may offer us battle with advantage; and who knows but he may gain the victory by those very sins, to which perhaps we, for many years, had hardly any temptation. O! how cunningly does he work! how enticing is the world! even in lawful things, very often, the most dangerous snares lie hidden. A single word that we hear may be able to disturb our peace. One unguarded look is sometimes enough to infatuate our hearts. There is danger on all sides. Unless the LORD opens our eyes, and preserves us on all occasions, each of us, even the best, may still be overcome, and deadly hurt by sin and the world. Satan is particularly busy to sift the godly most of all, and having caught them in his net, triumphs exceedingly over them.

O LORD, suffer me never to fall asleep again!

Help me to watch and pray,
 And on thyself rely;

| And let me ne'er my trust betray,
 | Lest I for ever die.

23 JAN.

(23)

THE more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them, EXOD. i. 12. chap. ii. 23, 25.

THE more we are oppressed by our spiritual and temporal enemy, the more will the kingdom of God increase in and through us. And when distress and dangers oppress us most, God hastens to our aid, and makes our necessity itself the means of our relief; for the ways of God are always wonderful. It was an extreme distress when the children of the Israelites were cast into the river; but this was the means of preserving Moses, their intended deliverer. When Moses came, they were not relieved immediately, for their calamities increased. This is God's method. But they cried the more to God, and he relieved them by signs and wonders. After this, their distress was greater than ever, at the Red sea. For after God has shewn his glory in assisting us, he can still send greater trials. But when they were beset on all sides by distress and death, then came the most glorious succour of all; and their enemies perished in the Red sea. LORD, suffer us not to despair in any extremity, but enable us to believe and experience that the greater our distress, the nearer and more glorious will be thy aid, and all our enemies will be consumed as stubble before the devouring flame.

LORD, I am thine, but thou wilt prove
My faith, my patience, and my love.
When men of spite against me join,
They are the sword, the hand is thine.

What sinners value, I resign;
LORD, 'tis enough that Thou art mine;
I shall behold thy blissful face,
And stand compleat in righteousness,

24 JAN.

(24)

HEREIN is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him, because he first loved us, 1 JOHN IV. 10, 19. He that loves me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. We will come unto him, and make our abode with him, JOHN XIV. 21, 23.

O WHAT a glorious promise, what manner of love is this! LORD, I would not exchange my cross and sufferings, much less thy love, for the love and honours of the world. Only make it more known to me, how great thy love is, and how much thou hast forgiven me, that I may love thee much again, and be thereby still better purged from the inordinate love of temporal things. It is my earnest desire that the gates of my heart should be open to none but to Thee, that thou alone mayest dwell in me. Shed thy love abroad in my heart, quicken and renew all the faculties of my mind and body, and work every thing in and for me.

O! for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak.

Yes, we will praise thee, dearest LORD,
Our souls are all on flame;

Hosanna round the spacious earth
To thine adored name.

Angels assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told.

25 JAN.

(25)

*W*HEREFORE we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him, 2 COR. V. 9.

THIS indeed is the true disposition of a soul espoused to CHRIST. She has but one care, which is to please him in all things. And this desire to do his will, is as it were the ring and seal of her bridegroom, which she may look upon even in the absence of all spiritual joy, as a token for good, that she is his spouse.

Ought not then this day, O my soul, to be a new wedding-day with Christ? He is desirous that thou shouldest be betrothed unto him, even now, and waits only for thy consent. Hearken, O daughter, consider and incline thine ear; be no longer married to the world. Forget thine own people and thy father's house, and take him alone for thy husband, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty. Wilt thou give the refusal to this glorious and loving Saviour? I hope not. Give it rather to the world, and resolutely say, It is enough, I have done with thee, O poor world! I break the bonds of my former love; my eyes and my feet shall henceforth only be directed to the blessed and eternal city of the new Jerusalem, where my heavenly bridegroom resides. And O what need have I to be duly prepared, dressed and beautified, against his coming, and the time of his taking me home to himself! LORD JESUS, keep me longing for thine appearance.

The LORD is ours, and we despise
The rage, tho' hell itself should rise:

The LORD is ours; the thought imparts
Immortal transport to our hearts.

26 JAN.

(26)

LET us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, HEB. iv. 16.

O THAT we were all so wise as to prepare and provide ourselves in due time with the right armour of faith, before the time of need and hour of death approach. Come, my reader, let us begin now, directly, to lay in a good stock of grace by continual prayer, lest we should come too late and be undone. Behold the encouragement of CHRIST. "I am the door, says he, and the way," JOHN x. i. chap. xiv. 6. Now by this door you may find the entrance into the heart and favour of GOD, CHRIST himself sitting on a mercy-seat to receive and welcome the vilest of sinners. And there is no drawing near to GOD but thro' him, and cloathed in the robes of the righteousness of our only Redeemer, Mediator. and Advocate. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, nay, the very All in all believers. With CHRIST they can never part; and he can never part with them.

Of Him who did salvation bring,
I could for ever think and sing:
Arise, ye guilty, He'll forgive;
Arise, ye poor, He will relieve.

Ask but his grace, and lo! 'tis giv'n;
Ask, and he turns your hell to heav'n;

Tho' sin and sorrow wound my soul,
JESU, thy balm can make it whole.

Guide thou, O LORD, guide thou my course,
And draw me on with thy sweet force;
Still make me walk, still make me tend,
By thee my way, to GOD my end.

27 JAN.

(27)

GOD commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners CHRIST died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to GOD by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, ROM. v. 8, 9, 10.

HERE we have much more reason to cry out than MOSES, DEUT. xxxiii. 3. "THE LORD loved the people," But here I must beseech thee too, O LORD! that this infinite gift of thy Son may appear to me greater and greater every day; and that thy love shining out in his redemption may go on so to increase in my soul, as to disperse all clouds of darkness, unbelief, and hard thoughts of thy goodness. Whenever this slanderous spirit tries to lift up his head, grant that my faith and love may be quickened and strengthened in such a manner, as heartily to praise thy great love in spite of all his suggestions. This is the chief desire which I offer unto thee in all my prayers, night and day. The want of faith and love, I am sensible, is still my greatest want: My soul is like a large empty vessel; but I pray thee to fill it speedily, notwithstanding any opposition that may be made by my unrenewed part.

Come, guilty souls, and flee away
Like doves to JESU's wounds;
This is the welcome gospel day,
Wherein free grace abounds.

God lov'd the world and gave his Son
To drink the cup of wrath;
And JESUS says, He'll cast out none,
That come to him by faith.

28 JAN.

(28)

FOR even hereunto were ye called; because CHRIST also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps, 1 PETER ii. 21.

To believe in CHRIST for redemption, for justification, for sanctification, is but one half of the duty of faith. It respects CHRIST only as he died and suffered for us, as he made atonement for our sins, peace with God, and reconciliation for us, as his righteousness is imputed to us unto justification. Unto these ends he is indeed primarily and principally proposed unto us in the gospel; and with respect unto them we are exhorted to receive him, and to believe in him. But this is not all that is required of us. CHRIST in the gospel is proposed unto us as our pattern and example of holiness. And as it is a cursed imagination, that the whole end of his life and death was to exemplify and confirm the doctrine of holiness, which he preached; so to neglect his being our example in considering him by faith unto that end, and labouring after conformity to him, is evil and pernicious. Wherefore let us be much in contemplation of what he was, what he did, how in all instances of duties and trials he carried himself, until an image or idea of his perfect holiness is implanted in our minds, and we are made like unto him thereby. *Amen*

THE gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith,
ROM. xvi. 26.

THE saving faith which is the gift of God, is known by many blessed effects; but this one includes all the rest, it produces obedience. He that is a child of God through faith in CHRIST JESUS, is born to obey; in his mind has not only the true light of revelation, but also the subjection of his understanding to it; his own reason is made to yield to the reason of God; his will bows to the power of divine truth; his heart receives it in the love of it; upon which the whole man obeys; he lives, and walks, and fights, and conquers by the faith of the Son of God; yea, his faith is mighty thro' God to the pulling down of strongholds, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST," O my God, let it be thus with me; holy and eternal Spirit, shine upon thine own grace, and let me see more clearly that my faith is of thine operation.—O lead me from faith to faith—and in hearing, reading, meditating on thy word, in praying, and in all the means of grace, meet me, and bless me, that my faith may still be growing, until I receive the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul.

30 JAN.

(30)

COME unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, MATT. xi. 28.

THIS is a free invitation to every weary and heavy laden sinner, made by him, who alone is able to take away the load and guilt of sin; every person under the pressure of sin, not only may, but must come to JESUS thus laden with guilt, if he hopes to succeed for pardon. While we endeavour to prepare our way by holy qualifications, we rather fill it with stumbling blocks, whereby our souls are hindered from attaining to the salvation of CHRIST. CHRIST would have us to believe on him, who justifies the ungodly, and therefore he doth not require us to be godly before we believe: he came as a physician for the sick, and doth not expect they should recover their health in the least degree before they come to him. The vilest sinners are fitly prepared and qualified for this design, which is to shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, pardoning our sins, and saving us freely, *EPH. ii. 5, 9.* It is no affront to CHRIST, or slighting, or contemning the justice and holiness of GOD, to come to GOD while we are polluted sinners; but rather it is an affronting and contemning the saving grace, merit, and fulness of JESUS, if we endeavour to make ourselves righteous and holy before we receive CHRIST himself, and all holiness and righteousness in him by faith.

31 JAN.

(31)

THE kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it, MATT. xiii. 4, 5, 6.

THERE is in all men an innate principle urging them forward in a restless pursuit after happiness, but being ignorant of the true means of attaining it, they fall short of the end. The convinced sinner indeed, though satisfied that worldly pleasures, honours and profits, are no ways suited to fill up the void within, or pacify the clamours of an accusing conscience, yet, when left to himself, he seeks the living among the dead, striving to make his peace with God, by having recourse to his own legal duties and endeavours, instead of the peace-speaking blood of Jesus. Whilst he is working for life, and attempting to establish his own righteousness, the Spirit of God takes the veil from his understanding, gives him a glimpse of the hidden worth and unspeakable value of Jesus, the one pearl of great price; and then, like the merchant, who in quest after goodly pearls, unexpectedly finds one of great value that will enrich him for ever, sells all to make a purchase of it: The believer obtaining a true discovery of the excellent glory of the person of CHRIST in his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency to save to the uttermost, he freely and joyfully sells all he has, parts not only with his sins, but with his righteousness and most admired attainments, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS his LORD.

Long did my soul in Jesu's form,
No comeliness, or beauty see;
His sacred name, by others priz'd,
Was tasteless still, and dead to me.
Thanks to the Author of all grace,
That shew'd me, wretched, naked, poor,

That sweetly led me to the rock,
Where all salvation stands secure.
Glad I forsook my righteous pride,
My moral, tarnish'd, sinful dress;
Exchang'd my dross away for CHRIST,
And found the robe of righteousness.

I FEB.

(32)

GOD, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST, but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, 2 COR. iv. 6, 7.

THIS knowledge is an heart-enriching knowledge; it is an enlivening, transforming, CHRIST-endeared knowledge, and therefore is a rich and great treasure that we have in the earthen vessel.—Without this saving knowledge we have no GOD, no CHRIST, no grace, no faith, no union with CHRIST, no actual justification, pardon of sin, peace, nor eternal life. But whoever has found CHRIST, the pearl of great price, the treasure hid, has found matter of great rejoicing; for he was poor before, and this treasure enricheth him; he was naked before, but finding this treasure, he is gloriously clothed; he was forced before to feed upon husks, but now he feeds on the bread of life; he was far in debt before, but now he sees the debt is paid, that he is justified from all things, and pardoned for ever; he saw he was a child of wrath before, but now he is become a child of GOD; that he was a captive and in chains before, but now he is set at liberty; condemned before, but now sees there is no condemnation to him, nor to any one that is in CHRIST JESUS; that he was a fool before, but now he is made wise to salvation. Reader, canst thou set to thy seal to the truth and power of such experience?—then thou art wise indeed; if not, thou hast much to learn: Apply with speed, and remember, it is GOD alone that gives this light and knowledge.

THIS is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son JESUS CHRIST, 1 JOHN iii. 23. For GOD has sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him, chap. iv. 9.

THE Father breaks forth, as it were, through the whole Scripture in high praises of his Son. He calls out from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," MATT. xvii. 5. Nothing therefore can be more agreeable to him, than to receive this his Son, and believe his reports, JOHN xvi. 27. and on doing this we shall have life; but by omitting it, we look upon him as a liar. Unbelief therefore in him who refuses to accept of this great gift, is, no doubt, the greatest of all sins. O LORD, teach me this, and grant me faith.

"WHY art thou so backward, O my poor soul, to believe, like the rest of God's children, in CHRIST? Hast thou not as good a right to it as they have? Who can dispute with thee this privilege? It is the express Will of the Father, nay, he even commands thee to do it. Has he given his only Son, by an act of inconceivable love, to die for thee, to the very end that thou shouldest live? O what a pleasing thing will it be to him, to put thy whole trust upon this his well-beloved Son! This would be the joy of his heart, more than any thing else. Therefore delay no longer to receive what his love has offered thee; but firmly believe that the Father loves thee, as well as the Son."

Author of faith, to thee I lift
My weary, longing eyes;

O let me now receive that gift,
My soul without it dies!

D

WORTHY is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, REV. V. 12

O LORD! how mean and slight notions have I often of thy great power? By these I am discouraged, and thou art robbed of thy praise: grant, therefore, that though I would always be duly debased, and convinced of my nothingness in such a manner, as never to ascribe any good to myself, or think myself worthy of the least thing in the way of merit, for at the best I am but an unprofitable servant: yet thy grace and power may at the same time appear to me abundantly greater than all my sins, so that I may have always encouragement enough to believe in and praise thy holy name.

Come let us join our chearful songs
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

"Worthy the Lamb that dy'd," they cry,

"To be exalted thus;"

"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply,

"For he was slain for us,"

Let all that dwell above the sky,
And air, and earth, and seas,
Conspire to lift his glories high,
And speak his endless praise.

The whole creation join in one,
To bless the sacred name

Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb,

MY soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, PSALM lxiii. 5. Allelujah ! for the LORD God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, REV. xix 6.

WHAT tends not to thy glory, O LORD, and is not thy own work, whatever appearance it may have, is not really good and profitable : preserve and assist me therefore to do all things as of thee, in thy sight, and to thy honour ; may my soul be ever magnifying thy name, O my dear Redeemer and Bridegroom, and my whole conversation be directed to thy praise. Grant that my heart and mouth may be ever full of thy great mercies, and overflow continually with thanksgiving.

My God, my King, thy various praise
Shall fill the remnant of my days ;
Thy grace employ my humble tongue,
Till death and glory raise the song.

The wings of ev'ry hour shall bear
Some thankful tribute to thine ear ;
And ev'ry setting sun shall see
New works of duty done for thee.

Thy truth and beauty I'll proclaim ;
Thy bounty flows an endless stream ;
Thy mercy swift, thine anger slow,
But dreadful to the stubborn foe.

And who can speak thy wondrous deeds ?
Thy greatness all our thoughts exceeds,
Vast and unsearchable thy ways,
Vast and immortal be thy praise.

5 FEB.

(36)

FORSAKE not the works of thine own hands, **PSALM cxxxviii. 8.**—Divine answer. *He which has begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of JESUS CHRIST, PHIL. i. 6.*

THE right way to grow in grace is not to draw it from God, as it were by force, from a wrong principle or design; but first, to give thyself entirely over to thy heavenly Father through CHRIST, who knows what thou wantest, and will never forsake thee. Secondly, to abide in CHRIST, and carefully cherish the new life, which, be it ever so weak and little now, in comparison to the old man, will increase and gradually out-grow him, as a new skin does the old. May the LORD only give us grace to watch against the opposite extreme, so as never to be lulled into a false rest, or a lukewarm spirit; but to be ever diligently and seriously employed in crucifying the flesh, and using all the means of grace; then we need not be anxiously troubled for the growing of the work of God in our souls.

My soul lies cleaving to the dust ;
LORD, give me life divine ;
From vain desires, and ev'ry lust,
Turn off these eyes of mine.
I need the influence of thy grace
To speed me in thy way,

Lest I should loiter in my race,
Or turn my feet astray.
Are not thy mercies sov'reign still ?
And thou a faithful God ?
Wilt thou not grant me warmer zeal
To run the heav'nly road ?

6 FEB.

(37)

THE fashion of this world passes away, 1 COR. vii. 31.

As long as we feed on the husks of the world, and are in love with it, we are neither willing nor able to taste the comforts of the love of GOD. But when sin and the world are become an abomination to us, and we strive to get rid of them, we are fit vessels to receive him: then we begin to hunger after him. And though we are chastened by the LORD, yet is he not angry with us, but does it to embitter sin and the world more and more to us, and to make us lothe them, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me;
Once I admir'd its trifles too,
But grace has set me free.

Its pleasures now no longer please,
No more content afford;
Far from my heart be joys like these,
Now I have known the LORD.

As by the light of op'ning day,
The stars are all conceal'd,

So earthly pleasures fade away,
When JESUS is reveal'd.

Now, LORD, I would be thine alone,
And wholly live to thee;
But may I hope that thou wilt own
A worthless worm like me!

Yes, tho' of sinners I'm the worst,
I cannot doubt thy will;
For if thou hadst not lov'd me first
I had refus'd thee still.

7 FEB

(38)

THINE is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen, MATT. vi. 13. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory, and honour, and power, REV. iv. 10, 11.

ONE that is really poor in spirit, though he hath practised the duties of the christian life ever so long, and so well, always thinks himself to have received but a very little portion of CHRIST, and the work of sanctification hardly to be begun in his soul. So far is he from believing he has already attained to it, that after all his best actions he counts himself not worthy to be called by the name of a grateful son; he is never pleased with himself. No degree of holiness will satisfy his soul. He seeks and finds no rest or comfort, but in the infinite mercy of GOD, and in the pardon of his sins by faith; though he does not divide CHRIST, but receives him in all his offices, and gives himself entirely up to him without reserve, to be more and more sanctified and perfected. And in this state he is safe indeed, he is prepared for death, and has no reason to be anxiously afraid, though earnestly desirous of higher degrees of sanctification. Death might come upon him before he arrived to it; and even his very best thoughts, without a sense of GOD's forgiveness, would not support and comfort him in death.

8 FEB.

(39)

HE hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, 2 SAM. xxiii. 5. I have made a covenant with my chosen, PSALM lxxxix. 3.

THIS was David's plea and confidence, when with eternity full before him, he was just going to make his appearance before an infinitely pure God. This must be our plea also, if ever we would obtain the approbation of our judge. After a life of the most eminent holiness, the best of men will have reason to cry out, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O LORD." It is true indeed, the believer will discover some small evidences of grace, just to shew the child of God, and no more; but all so imperfect that he dare not ground his expectations on them. Here the covenant of grace steps in to his relief, wherein he sees ample provision made for the security of his eternal interest. For the covenant is made with CHRIST and his seed. It is an everlasting covenant, not only made before time, but extending its beneficial effects through the ages of eternity. It is ordered in all things, therefore nothing can be wanting in it, either to promote the glory of God, or the salvation of believers. It is sure also; depending on no conditions, requiring nothing but what it gives, conferring its blessings freely, and making them sure to all the seed, being established upon better promises. Happy souls who are interested in this well-ordered covenant! may it be all my salvation, and all my desire!

Thy word, O God, begot my faith;
From thence my hope doth spring;
Founded alone on what God saith,
My soul adore and sing.

Thy word is truth, thy promise sure;
Hence faith and hope abide:
My soul in safety shall endure;
Nought can from CHRIST divide.

9 FEB.

(40)

I Will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; which the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, JOHN XIV. 16, 17.

WHEN GOD designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man, and the saving of sinners, to the praise of the glory of his grace, he appointed in his infinite wisdom two great means thereof; the one was the giving of his Son for them, and the other was the giving of his Spirit unto them. And hereby was way made for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity, which is the utmost end of all the works of God. Hereby were the love, grace, and wisdom of the Father, in the design and projection of the whole; the love grace, and condescension of the Son, in the execution, purchase, and procurement of grace and salvation for sinners, with the love, grace, and power of the Holy Spirit, in the effectual application of all unto the souls of men, made gloriously conspicuous. Hence from the first entrance of sin, there were two general heads of the promises of God unto men, concerning the means of their recovery and salvation; the one in sending his Son to take our nature upon him, and die; the other in giving his Spirit to make the fruits of his incarnation and sufferings effectual in and towards us. To these heads may all the promises of God be reduced. Happy for the church that the Spirit is to abide with it for ever; awful to think that the unconverted world neither can receive nor know the Spirit.

10 FEB.

(41)

GODLY sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death, 2 COR. vii. 10.

THE difference between legal and evangelical repentance lies in this; the former is an evidence that we are guilty, and liable to misery; the latter, that this guilt is removed, and misery relieved, through the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS. Even devils may have the one, but the other is the fruit of the Spirit in a soul that is renewed. Then be serious, O my soul, and ask thyself these questions; Dost thou grieve more for thy sins committed against thy God, than for the troubles into which they have brought thee? Wicked Cain could say, "My punishment is greater than I am able to bear;" but the returning, accepted prodigal cried, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," &c. Does thy repentance arise from the hope of mercy revealed in CHRIST? Then it is evangelical, EZEK. xvi. 63. but if it be only raised by apprehensions of the judgment to come, or from worldly disappointment, thou mayest perish notwithstanding thy concern: Is it mixed with love to God and his law as holy, and abhorrence of thyself, as polluted with sin? Dost thou confess thy sins with the hand of faith upon the head of CHRIST, as thy propitiation? And dost thou pray for a daily increase of this godly sorrow, and wish to die in the lively exercise of it?—Then thou art a justified publican, and thy repentance is to salvation.

LIGHT is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart,
 PSALM xcvi. 11. Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness; he is
 gracious, full of compassion, and righteous, PSALM cxii. 4. Therefore cast
 not away confidence, which has great recompence of reward; for ye have need of
 patience, &c. for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will
 not tarry, HEB. x. 35, 37. ISAIAH lviii. 10—12.

THIS shews that believers are subject to many changes of joy and sorrow. In a state of gladness therefore we have reason to fear; and in the hours of trouble and sadness to entertain good hopes. Thus we shall always be able to keep the happy medium between the extremes of levity and despair. Before a man has a true sense of his own misery, the complaints and infirmities of the saints are often a stumbling-block; but afterwards they will administer to him great comfort. This is the reason that God has revealed them in scripture; for the complaints of his children and elect give more comfort than all their most heroic actions.

Alas! it swells my sorrows high,
 To see my blessed JESUS frown;
 My spirits sink, my comforts die,
 And all the springs of life are down.

Yet why, my soul, why these complaints?
 Still while he frowns his bowels move;
 Still on his heart he bears his saints,
 And feels their sorrows, and his love.

I Find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, ROM. vii. 21.

O MY soul ! thou art always striving, yet sin always stirring ; thou fearest the truth of grace, because thou findest the working of sin ; but it will be always thus ; thou canst not come out of Egypt, but Amalek will lay wait in the way ; the flesh will be sure to trouble thee, although it be never able to conquer thee : he therefore that sits down, and is at rest in sin, it is a sign that Satan is there, the strong man, because his kingdom is in peace ; but where there is any work with CHRIST, there will be always war with sin ; sin was the womb of death, and only death must be the tomb of sin. GOD would have my soul humbled, therefore, though he hath broken my prison, yet he hath left the chain upon my feet : GOD would have my graces exercised, therefore, though he hath translated me into the kingdom of life, yet he hath left the Canaanite in the land ; GOD would have my faith exercised, therefore Goliath still shews himself in the field, that so I might make out to him " in the name of the LORD ; " I will betake me to the strength of CHRIST, and though I cannot help the rebelling power of sin, yet I shall always hinder the ruling power of it. As it shall be my grief because sin will have its being, so it shall be my care that it may never have its thriving ; though sin may live in me, yet I will never live in sin.

13 FEB.

(44)

GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; for he has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him, 2 COR. v. 19, 21. COL. i. 20. 1 PET. ii. 24.

It highly concerns all believers, who are desirous to have always peace and support within, to be ever sensible of their own misery and spiritual poverty, and so to live and rest solely and wholly in the all-sufficient atonement and righteousness of CHRIST JESUS our Saviour. Disquietness and laziness generally proceed from self-righteousness, and our not looking up and being indebted to him for every thing, but secretly trusting to something in ourselves.

JESU, thou art my righteousness,
For all my sins were thine;
Thy death has bought of God my peace,
Thy life has made him mine.

Spotless and just in thee I am;
I feel my sins forgiven:
I taste salvation in thy name,
And antedate my heav'n.

For ever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding side;
'Tis all my hope, and all my plea;
For me the Saviour dy'd!

My dying SAVIOUR and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin!
Sprinkle me ever in thy blood,
And cleanse, and keep me clean.

14 FEB.

(45)

Nevertheless I am continually with thee. Thou hast holden me by the right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to thy glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but GOD is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, PSALM lxxiii. 23—26. PSALM xvi. 18.

BABES in religion not only long for CHRIST, but for sensible communion with him; and very often they are indulged with it, that they may be weaned from the world. But those of fuller age, who have their senses more exercised, are thankful to have Him only, and to be adopted by Him; relying more on the word and covenant of God, than upon sweet sensations of the soul, which in times of trial and temptation are often wanting.

How oft have sin and Satan strove
To rend my soul from thee, my God?
But everlasting is thy love,
And JESUS seals it with his blood.
Amidst temptations sharp and strong,
My soul to this dear refuge flies;

Hope is my anchor firm and strong,
While tempests blow, and billows rise.
The Gospel bears my spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of my hope,
In oaths, and promises, and blood.

15 FEB.

(46)

*THERE is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of GOD.
GOD is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved, PSALM xlii. 4, 5.
Ye are of GOD, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he
that is in you, than he that is in the world, 1 JOHN iv. 4. PSALM cx. 2.
ZECH. ii. 5.*

TRUE christians in a right spirit still are subject to temptations from within and without, but watching unto prayer they do not fall by them. On the contrary, as temptations are great helps to discover their hidden infirmities, and stir them up to be more cautious, serious and faithful, they are followed and rewarded with great and glorious victories; consequently are so far from being half a fall, that they rather serve to keep believers from falling. What reason have we then to be afraid of temptations, since every one carries a new blessing along with it?

JESUS, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly;
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone;
Still support and comfort me;
All my trust on thee is stay'd,
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head,
With the shadow of thy wing.

16 FEB.

(47)

LET not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, ROM. vi. 12. JAMES iv. 7.

A CERTAIN city being strongly besieged by a potent enemy, which holding out long, was brought to extreme want; no hope of relief appeared; famine and sword, the two sad concomitants of war, attended; the poor inhabitants, at their wits end, entered into a serious consultation what was best to be done for their mutual safety; the result whereof was this, that there should be a considerable number of dead bodies, of which they had great plenty in the streets, clasped up in armour, and set upon the walls in the still time of night; thereby designing to apprise the enemy that some fresh supplies had been brought to their assistance: which fell out accordingly; the enemy was amazed, the siege was raised, the city relieved. This distressed city is the soul of man; the potent enemy laying before it is the devil, that great commander in chief over all such regiments as the world and the flesh can possibly raise for his service; and what course must the poor soul take in such a case? Surely no other, but consultation first had with God in prayer, to set out its dead and mortified lusts and affections; and then, no doubt, the devil, upon the sight thereof, will quit the place, and no more adventure his whole strength to so little purpose.

17 FEB.

(48)

AND GOD said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,*
GEN. i. 26.

THIS image of God, in which man was created, consisted in that natural perfection, and those moral endowments, in which he was made, and in which he bears some resemblance of his all-perfect Maker. It consists in that spiritual, rational, and immortal soul, resembling the nature of God, and in those faculties of understanding, will, and active powers, resembling the natural perfections of the Deity, with which the human soul was endowed. His body too had then some signatures of the divine perfection, in majesty and immortality, that raised it far above the brutes; and, as far as it was capable, made it resemble God. But the completing, and distinguishing part of the divine image upon man, was those moral endowments of perfect knowledge, entire rectitude, and universal holiness, with which the human understanding, will, and affections were created and adorned, in which the soul of man bore a most striking resemblance to the moral perfections of the God that made it. St Paul affirms, when he tells us, that if we would recover this divine image, that sin hath so miserably defaced, we must be "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," COL. iii. 10. EPH. iv. 24. See, reader, in TITUS ii. 11—15. an epitome of CHRIST's salvation both in thee and for thee.

18 FEB.

(49)

THE LORD preserves the simple; I was brought low, and he helped me,
PSALM CXVI 6.

HE who walks in godly simplicity and humility, accounting his own infirmities always the greatest, will best be preserved from being puffed up and sifted by the enemy of souls. And surely nothing should humble us more than justification by free grace. The more we consider and carefully cherish that, the more this simple, child-like, quiet temper will increase: for since there is nothing in ourselves which can be depended upon, but all must be freely received from CHRIST: this, at the same time cutting off all vain boasting, brings us low, settles our peace on CHRIST, who is our all, and is sure enough to be rested upon.

It is only from thee, O my dear Saviour, I can learn true simplicity: teach me therefore to turn mine eyes, not upon others, but upon myself. Humble me to the uttermost, and fashion me after thy own mind, that I may be careful to avoid every thing that is contrary to love. Keep me, O my light, from all self-dependence and self-conceitedness; bridle my carnal reason, and pull down all vain imaginations. Grant that my eye may be fixed only upon that one thing needful, which lasts eternally; and that in all my words, deeds, and gestures, I may always resemble the simplicity, innocence, fidelity, and love of a little child, MAT. xiii. 3.

Rich grace, free grace, most sweetly calls;
Directly come who will;
Just as you are; for CHRIST receives
Poor helpless sinners still.

'Tis grace each day that feeds our souls;
Grace keeps us inly poor;
And Oh! that nothing else but grace
May rule for evermore,

E

19 FEB.

(50)

THE LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want, PSALM xxiii. 1. He says it himself. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands, JOHN X. 10, 28.

THE LORD being my shepherd also, what can I then want? Nothing that is really good for me. The sense of it may sometimes be wanting; but even this want is the beginning of a greater fulness, and certainly works for my good. It stirreth me up to pray more earnestly: and thus my wants drive me to the green pastures, and to the brooks of fresh waters, even to my good shepherd, who is himself the best food, and the spring of living water.

My shepherd is the living LORD;
Now shall my wants be well supply'd;
His providence and holy word,
Become my safety and my guide.

In pastures where salvation grows
He makes me feed, he makes me rest;
There living water gently flows,
And all the food's divinely blest.

My wand'ring feet his ways mistake,
But he restores my soul to peace;
And leads me for his mercy's sake,
In the fair path of righteousness.

Tho' I walk thro' the gloomy vale,
Where death and all its terrors are,
My heart and hope shall never fail,
For God my shepherd's with me there.

20 FEB.

(51)

—*THE everlasting gospel*—REV. xiv. 6.

THE gospel is properly called “glad tidings,” for these reasons: We are polluted with the filth of sin; in it is opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness.—The way to heaven is blocked up by our sins; it reveals a new and living way through the flesh of CHRIST.—We are imprisoned debtors by multiplied transgressions; it shews that a price, the most inestimable, has been paid to discharge us.—We have by nature hard, strong, and impenitent hearts; in it is promised an heart of flesh.—We can of ourselves do nothing; it shews that through CHRIST we can do all things.—We feel that we are liable to err and backslide; it declares that God will scourge us till we return to him, but not take his loving kindness from us.—We know that we are liable to many calamities; it teaches us, that they shall all work together for our good.—We see that we are dying creatures; by it we are assured that we have a forerunner in heaven, and an eternal habitation with God in glory, LORD, send abroad and bless this gospel!

SALVATION! let the echo fly
The spacious earth around;

And all the armies of the sky
Conspire to raise the sound,

21 FEB.

(52)

THEY profess that they know GOD, but in works they deny him, TITUS
i. 16.

THERE is a profession of a special kind, which in its own nature is exposed to reproach in the world ; “ they that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution.” There is a being in CHRIST, and not living godly ; for there are branches in the vine by profession, that bring forth no fruit ; men that have not one drop of the Spirit of the witness of CHRIST, which torments the men of the earth. But they that will live godly, that is, engage in a profession, that shall on all occasions, and in all instances manifest the power of it, they shall suffer persecution. We see many every day keep up a profession, but such a profession as will not provoke the world. Now this is to be ashamed of the gospel, to be ashamed of the power and glory of it, to be ashamed of the Author of it. No man can put JESUS CHRIST to greater shame than by professing the gospel, without shewing the power of it, PHIL. iii. 18. REV. xi. 10. There can be no more vile and sordid hypocrisy, than for any to pretend unto inward habitual sanctification, while their lives are barren in the fruits of righteousness and obedience. Reader, of all dangers in profession, beware of a customary, traditional, or doctrinal owning of gospel truths, without an experimental acquaintance with the reality and efficacy of them, for “ all such will have their portion where is wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

22 FEB.

(53)

I Will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel, GEN. iii. 15.

THOUGH this is true of the animal serpent, yet it has a particular respect to the old serpent, the devil; and implies, that however he and the woman had been combined against God, their friendship should soon issue in the greatest enmity between each other, and especially between their seed. By "the seed of the woman" is to be understood CHRIST the Saviour; not excluding his friends and followers in every age of the world. This prediction of a Saviour, signified to our first parents these *four* things. 1. That the promised Saviour was not to be the man's, but the woman's seed, or born of a virgin. 2. That he was to be a man, by that expression, "Thou shalt bruise *his* heel." 3. That he should break the head of the serpent, or destroy his power and dominion over mankind, and punish him, and all his votaries, with an utter destruction. And, 4. That in order to our Saviour's doing so, he must have his own heel, or human nature, that lowest part of his mediatory person, bruised by the serpent, or persecuted and put to death by the Devil and his emissaries. This was the first intimation of a Saviour, that was made to the world. It was made to the serpent, for his immediate confusion. Made in the presence of our first parents, and before their sentence was pronounced, to inspire them with the hopes of pardon and life, and with a sense of the distinguishing mercy of God to them, and before he denounced so much as any temporal punishment, animated them with the hopes of eternal redemption.

23 FEB.

(54)

THE LORD do that which seems him good, 2 SAM.-X. 12.

A CHRISTIAN still feels the motion of self-will, and consequently of sin in his heart. And if it be asked, How can CHRIST and sin dwell together in one heart? The answer is; As a king and rebels in one kingdom or town. He does not agree or correspond with them, but subdues them, and maintains peace. But where self-will has the dominion, there is nothing but trouble and confusion; for unsanctified passions and a bad conscience not only are inward tortures, but often turn our great disadvantage, even in worldly affairs; whereas in the blood of CHRIST we have a good conscience, abundance of peace, and can be content and happy in the most indifferent outward circumstances.

Take great heed therefore, O my dear Christian, never to be led by thy own spirit, were it even in such things as seem to bring glory to God, if it is not of his own appointment. Our hearts sometimes are very deceitfully desirous of what pleases ourselves, while we pretend to seek God's glory; and were we not crossed in these our designs, they would prove a great burden to our life. Blessed is he, who not only prays with his lips, but is heartily willing also that nothing but the will of the LORD should be done in every thing. It is he alone that understands what may be good or dangerous to our spiritual or temporal circumstances. We being often blinded and drawn by our lusts, are too much inclined to choose at random what would be perhaps most detrimental.

SAVIOUR, to my heart be near,
Exercise the Shepherd's care;

| Guard my weakness by thy grace,
| Let me feel a constant peace.

THE LORD will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayers, PSALM cii. 17. They looked unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed, PSALM xxxiv. 5. See also the instance of the woman of Canaan, MATT. xv. 21—28. And what CHRIST says, LUKE xi. 5—13. and chap. xviii. 1—8. Likewise of a tossed vessel, MATT. viii. 24—27.

THE load of outward and inward affliction is not always prayed away with a few words, or in a few days. Sometimes it is necessary even to wrestle with God, and be very instant too; how else could faith and patience be exercised! If therefore the trials are sharp and lasting, it is not to weaken our faith; but to stir us up to be more instantly zealous in prayer, and the right use of the word of GOD: and by this means, to be so much more gloriously delivered and strengthened in faith: for whatever God sends upon us, it is not for the lessening, but for the increase of our faith.

GOD is the refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade;
Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold him present with his aid.

Let mountains from their seats be hurl'd
Down to the deep, and buried there;

Convulsions shake the solid world,
Our faith shall never yield to fear.

Loud may the troubled ocean rore,
In sacred peace our souls abide;
While ev'ry nation, ev'ry shore,
Trembles, and dreads the swelling tide.

25 FEB.

(56)

I Dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made, ISA. lviii. 15, 16.

To insist too much upon the sensible joy of faith, might produce a wrong joy, and make weak souls weaker still. Many a sincere Christian's heart is like a bottle of a very narrow passage, which can receive the dew of heavenly comfort only by little drops. But dost thou feel thyself quite naked, and void of all good? CHRIST will surely cover thee with the robe of righteousness. Go entirely out of thyself, looking only to him for every thing; and whatever gifts of joy, peace and holiness, may be given thee, trust not to them, but to CHRIST alone. This will make thee sure, and keep thy heart at rest.

Thus saith the high and lofty One,
I sit upon my holy throne;
My name is God; I dwell on high;
Dwell in my own Eternity.

But I descend to worlds below,
On earth I have mansion too:

The humble spirit and contrite
Is an abode of my delight.

The humble soul my words revive;
I bid the mourning sinner live;
Heal all the broken hearts I find,
And ease the sorrows of the mind.

26 FEB.

(57)

LORD, *by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong ; thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled,* PSALM xxx. 7.

SEE, my soul, in this verse, a picture of thine own experience ; how much art thou and David alike ! When I look up to heaven, how often do I see the sun both shine and set ? When I look down into myself, how often do I see my comforts rise and fall ? One while I am upon mount Tabor, and have a glance of heaven ; another while I lie in the valley of Bochim, weeping because I have lost sight of my heavenly country. Joshua's long day is many times turned into Paul's sad night. When God would quicken my affections, he gives me a glance of heaven, that so I might be in love with what I see ; when I begin to bless myself, and rest in my happy privileges, he draws a vail over the bright vision, that I may rest in nothing but himself, nor lothe what I so greatly love. He suffers my happiness here to be imperfect, that so I may be pressing on to that place where I shall be perfectly happy for ever. LOUD, when thou shewest thyself, let me love thee ; when my mountain stands strong, let me praise thee ; when thou withdrawest thyself, let me follow thee ; when thy countenance is hid, let me still believe that thou lovest me ; under all my changes here, let my soul be always breathing, panting, longing, and reaching after thee, till I shall so perfectly enjoy thee, that I may never lose thee more. *Amen.*

27 FEB.

(58)

SATAN has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, LUKE xxii. 31, 32. Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth, AMOS ix. 9. For, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, REV. iii. 10.

SOMETIMES we may imagine ourselves to be divinely convinced of the will of God, both by seeming outward providences and inward persuasions of faith ; and yet it is possible that the siftings of Satan are at the bottom ; however, the LORD will overrule him at last, and order all things to the best for his people. May the LORD make us watchful against our own spirit, and against the evil one, especially when he is transformed into an angel of light, that it may not be in his power to sift us so as to gain an advantage over us by our listening to his inward suggestions, or yielding to his subtil temptations.

In vain the baffled prince of hell
His cursed projects tries ;
We that were doom'd his endless slaves,
Are rais'd above the skies,
JESUS the LORD shall guard me safe
From ev'ry ill design ;

And to his heav'nly kingdom keep
This feeble soul of mine.
God is my everlasting aid,
And hell shall rage in vain ;
To Him be highest glory paid,
And endless praise. Amen.

WHOSE adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, &c. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of GOD of great price, 1 PET. iii. 3, 4. In rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, ISAIAH xxx. 15.

A CHRISTIAN's best accoutrements and festival clothes in which he daily celebrates his sabbath, is called, COL. iii. 10, 12, 14. "The new man, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, and, above all, charity." These are our ornaments we shall be dressed and adorned with. What dost thou adorn most, Body or Soul? "O thou meek and quiet Lamb of GOD, justly I blush before thee, when I consider my impatience, though I am never innocent, like thee. I humbly beseech thee to forgive me these my transgressions, since thou hast made sufficient atonement for all by thy meritorious silence. But deliver me from this cholerick, hot, and peevish temper also; and give me grace in all inward and outward troubles, to have that long-forbearing mind which was in thee. Make me daily more and more like a lamb; that on all occasions, grievous or joyful, I may be duly composed, and shew that excellent heavenly ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, not in many words, but in reality and power. Amen."

Giver of concord, Prince of peace,
Meek, lamb-like Son of GOD!
Bid our unruly passions cease,
And quench them with thy blood.

O let us find the ancient way
Our wond'ring foes to move;
And force the heathen world to say,
"See how these Christians love!"

I MARCH.

(60)

*TRUST thou in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell the land,
and verily thou shalt be fed, PSALM XXXVII. 3.*

By the grace of GOD, justice and equity shall be the pillars I will make use of to support my fortune in the world, and not favour and interest; and when those are too weak to uphold it, let it take its chance; and I hope I should be able to take the same course if my life were under the same circumstances; for I had much rather lose my right or my life by another man's injustice, than obtain the one or preserve the other by any base pursuit, or unworthy application of my own; nor shall I ever value, or seek for any favour but that of my GOD, to whom he that has grace enough to commit himself, his soul, and his everlasting concerns, may with great security commit his fortune, and all worldly matters. LORD, enable me to be continually doing good; let me live in this world as a probationer for eternity; let me not be envious against the evil-doers; nor ever repine at thy providence; let the light afforded me in this psalm enable me to read in thy book of providence, and well consider the end both of the righteous and of the wicked, that my judgment may be well formed, and my conduct uniformly agreeable to thy will: dispose of me and mine according to thine own pleasure; and whatever else may fail me, support my faith in thy word, providence, and grace, till I come eternally to enjoy thee,

2 MARCH.

(61)

BROAD is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : But, narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it, MATT. vii. 13, 14.

THIS sounds too harsh in the ears of the old man, who would not have the law made use of in these gospel-times, either to the converted or unconverted ; and yet to the old man the law, and not the gospel, properly belongs. St Paul, that great preacher of the gospel, made use of the law to rouse unconverted Felix from his security, ACTS xxiv. 25. and to warn the converted Romans from falling into it again, ROM. viii. 13.

Which way dost thou walk ? examine thyself. Is it the narrow way ? art thou quite sure of it ? venture not to go on any further at random. It is matter of great consequence ; if thou wilt be safe, try better for it ; thou mayest easily be deceived. Alas ! thou art surely in the broad way to destruction, if thou still lovest and art conformed to the world. Art thou but indifferent with regard to the things of God, relishing more the vanities, pleasures, companies, treasures, and honours of this world ? Thou art not in the good narrow way that leads unto life. O consider this well, and stop short, before it is too late, and thou drop into the bottomless pit of perdition.

Strait is the way, the door is strait,
That leads to joys on high ;

| 'Tis but a few that find the gate,
While crowds mistake and die,

3 MARCH.

(62)

AARON shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth into the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually; and thou shalt put into the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and Thummim, namely, light and integrity, EXODUS xxviii. 29.

Now am I, faith the believer, for ever in gracious remembrance with God, since my great High-priest and Advocate, CHRIST JESUS, bears my name continually before him on his heart. Whenever I am troubled about my sins, his powerful mediation will surely plead mercy for all my transgressions, and supply my wants abundantly. God not denying him any thing, I can through him continually be heard and obtain grace; for he makes perpetual intercession for me in heaven, by which all my prayers at all times, and even now, are sanctified, and presented to the Father, who heareth him always. O! who would not send up his petition to heaven in faith!

Now may our joyful tongues
Our Maker's honour sing;
JESUS the Priest, receives our songs,
And bears them to the King.
Before his Father's eye
Our humble suit he moves;

The Father lays his thunder by,
And looks, and smiles, and loves:
No fiery vengeance now,
No burning wrath comes down;
If justice calls for sinners' blood,
The Saviour shews his own.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, LUKE ix. 23.

DOING this, all the rest will be easy; if we know that we are nothing, are unworthy of every thing, and have nothing of our own, we can lose nothing. We have no property, since we are but stewards of the LORD. We have no honour or shame of our own, after the manner of the world: this being our only honour, if GOD is glorified, and our only shame, if he is dishonoured by us. The glory of GOD we must have at heart, and in his cause be like lions, but in our own cause, like lambs. Therefore when we are crossed in things which do not concern the glory of GOD, and the real good of our neighbour, but our own interest, and are unwilling to suffer any thing, we shall miscarry, and be involved in greater troubles: But denying ourselves, we shall lose only a good deal of vexation; and instead of this, receive CHRIST, with all his spiritual and temporal blessings, as far as we want them; which alone can make us cheerful and happy. But whosoever desires to please the world in its taste, "with his singularities," seeking himself and his own glory, cannot be a follower of CHRIST in this, and have boldness towards GOD. And how will it be with them in the hour of death and judgment? By this every one, learned or unlearned, may try themselves; whom do they please; GOD, or the world?

5 MARCH.

(64)

*U*NTO you which believe he is precious, 1 PETER ii. 7.

READER, put these few following questions to thine own heart, as in the presence of GOD; if thou canst answer them affirmatively, doubt not thy real interest in him, and in his great salvation. Is the Lord JESUS CHRIST precious to me, as he is to all that believe? Once he was to me without form or comeliness, and I saw no beauty in him; is he now to me the chiefest of ten thousands, yea, altogether lovely? Do I behold an infinite amiableness and glory in his person, a transcendent excellency in his righteousness, an inexhausted fulness in his grace, and an heaven of happiness in his love? Do I esteem him above every name, love him above every creature and thing, and value an interest in him before ten thousand worlds? Is the language of my soul, "None but CHRIST, none but CHRIST?" "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" "and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Is all the world, all that is admired in it, esteemed by me as dung, and beheld with the greatest contempt, when compared with a glorious CHRIST, the ravishing sweetness of his love, and the unsearchable riches of his grace. Do I wish nothing so ardently, seek nothing so diligently, and rejoice in nothing so greatly, as to win CHRIST, and be found in him? — Be this my portion! — and can I say, I want, I wish, I ask no more?

UPON thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is wrought gold. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear. Forget also thine own people and thy Father's house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy LORD, and worship thou him, PSALM XLV. 10—12, 14.

OBSERVE, O my soul! that thy celestial Bridegroom does not require any ornament, merit, worthiness and beauty of thy own: no, he will wash thee himself with his blood, he will adorn thee and make thee truly amiable to himself and to his Father. O sweet and eternal truth! "He has loved and washed me also from my sins in his own blood!" He has, and I have in him a more than angelical beauty. O the unspeakable fairness of this bridegroom and his spouse! Why should I not cleave to him alone, and love him above all others?

The King of saints, how fair his face,
Adorn'd with majesty and grace!
He comes with blessings from above,
And wins the nations to his love!

At his right hand our eyes behold
The queen, array'd in purest gold;
The world admires her heav'nly dress,
Her robe of joy and righteousness.

He forms her beauties like his own;
He calls and seats her near his throne:
Fair stranger, let thine heart forget
The idols of thy native state.

So shall the King the more rejoice
In thee the fav'rite of his choice;
Let him be lov'd and yet ador'd,
For He's thy maker and thy LORD,

7 MARCH.

(66)

THEY that are CHRIST'S have crucified the flesh, with the lusts and affections thereof, GAL. V. 24.

ALTHOUGH the flesh is alive still, and frequently stirs, yet it cannot fulfil its desires, because it is fastened to the cross: With the crucifying of the flesh we have to do as long as we live. This is the cross we are to take up daily, and which either prevents many outward crosses, or at least yields great comfort under them. The cross being an extraordinary good means to experience the sweetness of the word of God, thou must always be ready and prepared for it, O my soul. And if none comes from without, take care to break thy own will in every thing. Painful and hard as this may seem to be at first, yet it will certainly very soon grow easier, and be matter of real joy. Blessing and peace will attend thy ways and steps, that thou shalt glorify God for having been resigned and guided, not by thy own, but his good will and pleasure. Self-will, on the other hand, creates nothing but vexation, trouble and uneasiness. It is punished by itself, deprives us of all real blessings; and therefore deserves, and is best to be broke and crucified in its first motions.

Still I feel a fleshly part,
Much corruption in my heart;
Oh! I am very vile indeed,
Of thy blood I sure have need,

Break, O break this heart of stone;
Form it for thy use alone;
Bid each vanity depart;
Build thy temple in my heart.

8 MARCH.

(67)

AND the LORD had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect, GEN. iv. 4, 5.

HERE are two brothers bringing each of them an oblation to the LORD. Cain, as an husbandman, brought of the produce of the ground he cultivated; Abel, as a shepherd, some of the firslings of his flock, with the fat of them; consequently both believed there was a God that made the world, and was to be worshipped; and yet one was accepted, the other rejected. Cain's sacrifice was wholly eucharistical, or a thank-offering to God, for the blessings of his providence. Abel's was not only of the eucharistic, but of the expiatory kind; and while it was an expression of gratitude for the blessings of providence, it was also typical of the atonement by CHRIST, and expressive of his hope of redemption through him. But what made the chief difference between them was, that Cain presented his offering while his heart was withheld, and without faith in CHRIST, so was of the wicked one: Abel brought both his person and sacrifice an offering to the LORD; he presented his oblation, and performed the other parts of worship with faith in God, and the promised Saviour; and with sincerity, humility, and love: thus God had respect to him, and his offering; accepted first his person as justified, then his offering; but neither the person nor offering of Cain found acceptance with God. Reader, mark the difference; by this Abel speaks to thee: Art thou in a state of acceptance with God by faith in JESUS? Is thy whole dependence for pardon and life on CHRIST crucified? Dost thou obey from a principle of love? Then thou shalt be blessed with righteous Abel here and for ever,

9 MARCH.

(68)

ON that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever. The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul, **LEV. xvi. 30, 51. chap. xvii. 11.**

OUR great day of atonement is that on which CHRIST shed his blood for us on the cross, and thereby made atonement for us. Now if it was necessary for the Israelites to afflict their souls, and chastise their bodies on their great day of atonement, how much more ought we to pray for humility and repentance, as the evidence of our interest in the propitiation made by CHRIST JESUS? And as they abstained from all labour on that day, when the high priest alone was employed, so should we abstain from all our sinful works; and particularly from all self-sufficiency of righteousness; and seek our salvation only in the meritorious blood of atonement shed by our High-priest; for the life of our souls is in the blood of JESUS. O my Redeemer, may I, with an afflicted soul, ever seek my atonement, life and salvation in thy blood and death; and may I lie down and rise up, in full confidence that I am pardoned through thy blood.

Father, God, who seest in me
Only sin and misery,
See thine own anointed One,
Look on thy beloved Son!

Turn from me thy glorious eyes,
To that bloody sacrifice,

To that full atonement made,
To that utmost ransom paid.

Hear his blood's prevailing cry;
Let thy bowels then reply;
Then through him the sinner see;
Then in JESUS look on me.

10 MARCH.

(69)

B*Y the grace of GOD I am what I am, 1 COR. xv. 10.*

BE this my motto, both as to my natural and spiritual life ; how else could I have existed at all ? Had not foreknowledge planned, and wisdom contrived, and power put every atom together, and fixed my scene of action, I had never been here. Nor is this GOD of grace leis to be seen in every motion of my soul towards him : had not every spring been in him, this table on which I lean had felt as much bias toward him as I. The first check of conscience, the first thrill of fear, the first view of guilt, the first tear of penitence, were all his own : the first drawings of the Spirit, the first sight of CHRIST, the first dawn of hope, were all his own ; every succeeding step in the path of duty, every attainment in grace, every victory over the world and sin, every evidence and token of the safety of my everlasting state, and every sweet interval of communion I have had with him, were still all his own ; and the last labour of love, the last act of faith, and conquest over sin, death and hell, together with an admission into eternal glory, must and shall be all his own likewise. The spring is Love ; the mean is CHRIST ; the footing firm, " the headstone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it ; " and grace shall be crowned with everlasting glory.

11 MARCH.

(70)

THE love of CHRIST constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again, 2 COR. V. 14, 15.

IF the love and power of CHRIST shall constrain us, we must needs be always meditating and relying on him and his death. This will cut off all workings of our own, and make room for CHRIST to work every thing in us and through us. O LORD, may thy love on the cross fire my frozen heart also; that I may now begin to love and to praise thee purely and fervently, and to offer my whole life up to thee as an entire sacrifice of love.

Raise your triumphant songs
To an immortal tune;
Let the wide earth resound the deeds
Celestial grace has done.
Sing how eternal love
Its chief Beloved chose;
And bid him raise our wretched race
From their abyss of woes,

I

Now sinners dry your tears,
Let hopeless sorrows cease;
Bow to the scepter of his love,
And take the offer'd peace.
LORD, we obey thy call;
We lay a humble claim
To the salvation thou hast brought,
And love and praise thy name.

12 MARCH.

(71)

WHATSOEVER thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest, ECCLES. ix. 10.

THE business of life is to glorify God, and to work out our own salvation; all other concerns are subordinate to these; "the time is short; as the tree falleth so it lieth;" and where death strikes down, there God lays out, either for mercy or misery: so that I may compare it to the red sea; if I go in an Israelite, my landing shall be in glory, and my rejoicing in triumph, to see all mine enemies dead upon the sea-shore; but if I go in an Egyptian, if I be on this side the cloud, on this side the covenant, and go in hardened among the troops of Pharaoh, justice shall return in its full strength; and an inundation of judgment shall overflow my soul for ever. Or I may compare death to the sleep of the ten virgins, of whom it is said, "They all slumbered and slept;" we shall all fall into this sleep: Now if I lie down with the wise, I shall go in with the bridegroom; but if I sleep with the foolish, without oil in my lamp, without grace in my soul, I have closed the gates of mercy upon me for ever. I see then this life is the time wherein I must go forth to meet the LORD; this is the hour wherein I must do my work, and that the day wherein I must be judged according to my works. I know not how soon I may fall into this sleep; therefore, LORD, grant that I live every day in thy sight, as I desire to appear the last day in thy presence.

13 MARCH.

(72)

SIN is a reproach to any people, PROV. xiv. 34.

BE not deceived therefore with false notions of faith. Where there is true faith, no sin has dominion. A man having no feeling of the desperate wickedness of his heart, may imagine he has faith enough; but being once convinced of that, he soon perceives that it is the hardest thing in the world to believe. It requires the same power by which CHRIST was raised from the dead. St Paul most emphatically describes it with six remarkable words, EPH. i. 19, 20. How then can any man think it an easy matter to believe? O the dreadful blindness and security which all the world runs into! may the LORD open their eyes!

LORD, how secure my conscience was,
And felt no inward dread!

I was alive without the law,
And thought my sins were dead.

My hopes of heav'n were firm and bright;
But since the precept came

With a convincing pow'r and light,
I find how vile I am,

I'm like a helpless captive, sold
Under the pow'r of sin;
I cannot do the good I would,
Nor keep my conscience clean.

My God! I cry with ev'ry breath
For some kind pow'r to save,
To break the yoke of sin and death,
And thus redeem the slave.

AT the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not, NUMB. ix. 18, 19.

THUS the spiritual Israelites; they should not anticipate or undertake any thing from their own will, lest confusion and disappointment should encompass every path. The unconverted are full of their own will; how should they succeed? They are bewildered here, and run into perdition eternally. Sometimes the faithful may, with a good design, when they are engaged in a good work, anticipate the will of God, and not wait for his counsel. And yet the Israelites journeyed not, though the cloud tarried many days, and they might imagine they were losing time on their journey. O my God, grant, that in all things, even in my best works, I may be guided by thine eye, and wait for thy counsel with assured tranquillity: may I speak, or be silent, work or rest, when and as thou wilt; then shall my ways be blest, and thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me.

My God, the steps of pious men
Are order'd by thy will;
Tho' they should fall, they rise again,
Thy hand supports them still,

I chose the path of heav'nly truth,
And glory in my choice;
Not all the riches of the earth
Cou'd make me so rejoice.

15 MARCH.

(74)

IN him was life, and the life was the light of men, JOHN i. 4.

WHATEVER notional knowledge men may have of divine truths, as they are doctrinally proposed in the scripture, yet if they know them not in their respect unto the person of CHRIST, as the foundation of the counsels of God; if they discern not how they proceed from him, and center in him, they will bring no saving, spiritual light unto their understandings; for all spiritual life and light is in him, and from him alone. The difference between believers and unbelievers, as to knowledge, is not so much in the matter of their knowledge, as in the manner of knowing. Unbelievers, some of them, may know more, and be able to say more of God, his perfections and will, than many believers; but they know nothing as they ought, nothing in a right manner, nothing spiritually and savingly, nothing with an holy, heavenly light. The excellency of a believer is not that he hath large apprehensions of things, but that what he doth apprehend, which may perhaps be very little, he sees it in the light of the Spirit of God, in a saving, soultransforming light. And this is that which gives us communion with God; and not prying thoughts, or curious raised notions. In this knowledge; LORD, give me to increase every day.

WE then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, ROM. xv. 1. Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted, GAL. v. 1. Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? ROM. xiv. 4.

EXTRAORDINARY quickenings and strengthenings being often followed by particular temptations, conflicts and sufferings, require a particular watchfulness, if we would be earnest not to provoke the LORD to visit us with sore punishments for our carelessness. Fear therefore, rejoice with trembling, and secure thyself from falling, by tempering thy joy with true humility and gentleness towards the faults of others. Be never so high-minded, O man ! at the miscarriage of others, as to think thou wouldest not do so, should it happen to be thy case ; for if GOD does not hold thee up himself, thou wilt surely make greater mistakes. Therefore thou hadst better not look upon others, but upon thyself : and, for fear of falling, be continually watchful in prayer. A great many would not have fallen so deep, had they been truly humble and more charitable in judging of others. He who exalteth himself above others, and does not bear with the weak, is sometimes humbled and debased under the very weakest of all. Bear therefore, since GOD bears with thee : And he that bears most with others, shews the greatest strength.

JESU, LORD, we look to thee ;
 Let us in thy Name agree ;
 Each to each unite, endear,
 Come, and spread thy banner here.

Make us of one heart and mind,
 Courteous, pitiful and kind,
 Lowly, meek in thought and word,
 Altogether like our LORD.

17 MARCH.

(76)

THOU art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me and guide me, PSALM xxxi. 4. *They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel.* JER. xxxi. 9.

HE that comes in this manner, will certainly be led of GOD. Now, O LORD, I am blind, and heartily desire also to be directed by thee alone in all my ways and steps, in great and little things. Suffer me never to follow my own spirit and natural inclinations, whatever good appearance they may have. Be pleased to cross them continually, whenever they are contrary to thy will; often have I been deceived by false appearance already; my zeal has not always been according to knowledge; I have put natural passion in the place thereof, and thought I was contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and have afterwards found it no better than the effect of a party spirit. Be then a Father to me, O LORD, and instruct thy waiting child in all necessary truths, and lead me in all thy righteous ways.

Thou art my portion, O my GOD;
Soon as I know thy way,
My heart makes haste t' obey thy word,
And suffers no delay.

If once I wander from thy path,
I think upon my ways,
Then turn my feet to thy commands,
And trust thy pard'ning grace.

Now I am thine, for ever thine;
O save thy servant, LORD;
Thou art my shield, my hiding place;
My hope is in thy word.

Thou hast inclin'd this heart of mine
Thy statutes to fulfil;
And thus till mortal life shall end,
Would I perform thy will.

18 MARCH.

(77)

THOU wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever : for in the LORD JEROVAH is everlasting strength, ISAI. xxvi. 3, 4. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me, chap. xxvii. 5.

To enjoy an undisturbed peace, great care is to be taken that we do not look and depend upon any thing in ourselves, since all is but imperfect, and ever will be so. We are to trust only in the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world, to feed our souls continually in this gospel of peace, and be ever watchful, faithful, quiet and humble : for we never lose any thing of our peace, except it is stolen by some pride, or other unguarded affections.

Hence from my soul, sad thoughts, be gone,
And leave me to my joys ;
My tongue shall triumph in my God,
And make a joyful noise.

Darkness and doubts had veil'd my mind,
And drown'd my head in tears,
Till sov'reign grace with shining rays
Dispell'd my gloomy fears.

O, what immortal joys I felt,
And raptures all divine,
When Jesus told me I was HIS,
And my Beloved mine.

In vain the tempter frights my soul,
And breaks my peace in vain ;
One glimpse, dear Saviour, of thy face,
Revives my joys again.

19 MARCH.

(78)

THY maker is thine husband ; the LORD of hosts is his name. The ransom of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, Isa. liv. 5. chap. xxxv. 10.

WHEN CYRUS took the king of Armenia, and his son Tigranes, and their wives and children, prisoners, and, upon their humble submission beyond all hope, gave them their liberty and their lives ; in their return home, as they all fell a commending Cyrus, some for his personage, some for his power, some for his clemency, “ Tigranes asked his wife, What thinkest thou of Cyrus ? Is he not a comely, and a proper man of a majestic presence ? Truly, said she, I know not what manner of man he is, I never looked on him. Why, said he, where were thine eyes all the while ? Upon whom didst thou look ? I fixed mine eyes on him, said she, all the while upon him, (meaning her husband) who in mine hearing offered to Cyrus, to lay down his life for my ransom.” And thus, if any question the devout soul, whether she be not enamoured with the beauty of Cherubims, Seraphims, Angels, and Saints, with the pomp and splendor of that heavenly court ; her answer will be that of Tigranes’s wife, “ That she never did so much as cast a look upon them, because her eyes were never off him, who not only offered to lay down his life for her, but actually *did* lay down his life for her, and ransomed her from all her enemies with his own blood.” “ Whom should she have in heaven but him, who had none on earth but her ?”

20 MARCH.

(79)

THOU shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I am thy part and thine inheritance, NUMB. xviii. 20.

Who has and loves the LORD JESUS, finds unspeakably more delight, honour and riches in him, than in all other things. Then all is willingly denied for his sake, and this denial springs from faith. Now, O LORD ! thou art my all also, and to draw near to thee is my greatest happiness. This shall be my treasure and portion, that thou lovest me, and I desire to love thee eternally and keep thy statutes.

Beset with snares on ev'ry hand,
In life's uncertain path I stand ;
Saviour divine ! diffuse thy light,
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

Engage this roving treacherous heart,
Great God ! to choose the better part ;
To scorn the trifles of a day,
For joys that none can take away.

Then let the wildest storms arise,
Let tempests mingle earth and skies ;
No fatal shipwreck shalt I fear,
But all my treasure with me bear.

If thou, my JESUS, still art nigh,
Chearful I live, and chearful die ;
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in thee.

21 MARCH.

(80)

LIKEWISE *the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us,* ROM. viii. 26.

“ GOD is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth ;” GOD hath many worshippers on particular occasions, who cannot be called spiritual worshippers : Take, for instance, the prayers of wicked men under their convictions, or their fears, troubles and dangers, and the prayers of believers. The former is merely an outcry that distressed nature makes to the GOD of it, and as such alone it considers him ; but the other is the voice of the Spirit of adoption, addressing itself in the hearts of believers unto GOD as a Father. Wo to professors of the gospel, who shall be seduced to believe, that all they have to do with GOD consists in their attendance upon moral virtue ; it is fit for them so to do, who being wearers of christianity, have a mind to turn Pagans ; but “ our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son JESUS CHRIST,” under the promise of workings and intercession of the Spirit ; for by them alone are the loves of the Father, and the fruits of the mediation of the Son communicated unto us, without which we have no interest or comfort in them ; and by the influences of the Spirit alone are we enabled to make any acceptable returns of obedience to GOD. To exclude the internal operations of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy the gospel.

EVERY man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible, 1 COR. ix. 25. For, He that overcometh shall inherit all things, REV. xxi. 7.

To be only an almost christian, is a very hard thing: but to be a christian altogether, makes all easy and pleasant. And such as desire to have the whole CHRIST, his whole salvation and all that is his, must needs give themselves up to him, not only in part, but wholly, according to that fundamental and most reasonable rule; All for all." And as far as we deny him any thing, we make ourselves unhappy; but the more we are resigned to him, the more we are fit to enjoy him and his spiritual blessings.

Many would sooner be persuaded to follow CHRIST, if it was enough to serve him by halves, and reserve some things to themselves. But what could that profit them? CHRIST will not be bargained with; and nothing more dangerous than the dividing our hearts between him and the world, or waiting from time to time for a more convenient season to break through. Thus you may live many years, and be neither cold nor hot; and so at last be spewed out of the LORD's mouth. Consider this well, O ye double-minded, lukewarm souls! Christianity requires great striving, and overcoming all things, even our most favourite and darling lusts. Rouse therefore thy drowsy heart; spare thyself no longer; rise above the trifles of this world; fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called.

Take away my darling sin;
Make me willing to be clean;
Make me willing to receive
What thy goodness waits to give,

Force me, LORD, with all to part;
Tear all idols from my heart;
Let thy pow'r on me be shewn,
Take away the heart of stone.

23 MARCH.

(82)

A New commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another, JOHN xiii. 34.

ALL the commandments of God are commandments of love, tending to our real good and great happiness, far from being grievous to those who have faith and love ; the practice thereof is life and peace. The world may think it a grievous burden ; but this is a great mistake indeed. Sin is grievous. In hatred, envy, anger, revenge, pride, there is nothing but torment and slavery ; but in love there is a sweet rest and pleasure. Thus a sinner always punishes himself, and is robbed of great peace and blessing, by transgressing the commandments of God.

SAVIOUR, look down with pitying eyes,
Our jarring wills control ;
Let cordial, kind affections rise,
And harmonize the soul.

Subdue in us the carnal mind,
Its enmity destroy,

With cords of love th' old Adam bind,
And melt him into joy.

Us into closest union draw,
And in our inward parts
Let kindness sweetly write her law,
Let love command our hearts.

24 MARCH.

(83)

ONE thing is needful. And Mary has chosen that good part, which shall never be taken away from her, LUKE x. 42.

WE must not pretend to serve GOD with only going to church and doing other acts of outward devotion: whilst we are dead and cold, our religion is vain. Who first by faith seeks grace from the words of CHRIST, like Mary, is served by CHRIST; and this constrains him to serve Him and his neighbour readily again. It is almost impossible for such to go on in haughtiness, envy, hatred and disobedience. Grace and faith will resist it, and make them lowly, gentle, willing, obedient, active, without relying on any works of their own.

He that obtains CHRIST, the one thing needful, receives with him all the rest, and has no more need to be troubled about many things; he being our all, we can always live happily; whereas the children of this world must always be cumbered and divided between fears and hopes about their fate. In vanity we shall never find this good part; neither is there any salvation in the works of the law. Faith alone takes hold of it. And whoever withdraws his heart and senses from the noise and bustle of this world, and quietly looks for salvation in the wounds of CHRIST, the blessed fountains of blood and water, will certainly find it his better part.

The one thing needful, that good part,
Which Mary chose with all her heart,
I would pursue with heart and mind,
And seek unwearied till I find.

O LORD my GOD, to thee I pray,
Teach me to know and find the way,

How I may have my sins forgiv'n,
And safe, and surely get to heav'n.

Hidden in CHRIST the treasure lies,
That goodly pearl of so great price;
No other way but CHRIST there is
To endless happiness and bliss.

25 MARCH.

(84)

PURGE me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow, PSALM li. 7. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities, ver. 2. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. ISA. i. 18. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee, chap. xlv. 22.

WE must not keep away from CHRIST on account of our stumblings and manifold faults, if we will not come under the law again: but by humbling ourselves directly we are to crave pardon in his blood: by delaying this, our case will be worse. But the sooner it is done, the sooner we shall be forgiven. The LORD not imputing those sins to us which are sincerely repented of, our soul returns to its rest again. And instead of falling into carnal security (as some may think) it will rather strengthen our faith, and make us more confident. Hasten, therefore, and come as soon and as well as thou canst. He will receive thee, if thou couldst but creep.

O LORD, I fall before thy face;
My only refuge is thy grace:
No bleeding beast, nor flood, nor sea,
Can wash the dismal stain away.

JESUS, my GOD, thy blood alone
Has pow'r sufficient to atone;
Thy blood can make me white as snow:
No Jewish types could cleanse me so.

26 MARCH.

(85)

DELIVER us from evil, MATT vi. 13.—Divine answer; *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, ISA. xliii. 1, 2.* CHRIST has by his own blood once entered into the holy place; having obtained eternal redemption for us, HEB. ix. 12.

THIS redemption is the ground that we are delivered daily, and at last shall be delivered from all evil. Who lothes and detests not only the evil of punishment, but especially the evil of sin itself, and so earnestly pants after the Redeemer, has faith already, and sin has lost its dominion. And though he may be tempted with it severely, yet he is under the law no more; for the reigning power of sin being broke, the law has lost its condemning power also, we are delivered from the power of the evil one, and we may be sure of a continual, nay eternal redemption. We may often feel the evil, but be as often delivered from it also.

Thy solemn vows are on me, LORD;
Thou shalt receive my praise;
I'll sing, "How faithful is thy word!
"How righteous all thy ways."

Thou hast secur'd my soul from death,
O fet thy pris'ner free!
That heart and hand, and life and breath,
May be employ'd for thee.

27 MARCH.

(86)

STIR up the gift of God which is in thee, 2 TIM. i. 6. PSALM lxxii. 1.
2 SAM. vii. 18, 28.

How can this be done?—Answer; By looking as well upon thy own great poverty and wants, as upon the riches of grace, which is in CHRIST for thee, and so drawing near to God, through him in faith. But it is not enough to do this once for all, or now and then only. It is to be thy daily work. One day's omission may greatly hurt thy soul. Especially the morning hours are very proper for this purpose. These must directly be laid hold on to converse with God in prayer, before we meddle with any thing else in our business, though ever so needful and important, for fear of being entangled and distracted perhaps the whole day. And to gather the more strength, draw as near to CHRIST as possible, and even wrestle with him, as if it was the last time. Pour out thy whole heart before him; not giving over too soon; but be instant in thy supplications, at least with continual inward groanings, till thy heart burns within thee, and thou feelest the quickening influence of his grace and Spirit. Then great care is to be taken to preserve this blessing and strength in a quiet and well-composed mind, examining thyself frequently, especially at nights, how the day has been spent.

I'll lift my hands, I'll raise my voice,
While I have breath to pray or praise;

| This work shall make my heart rejoice,
And spend the remnant of my days.

28 MARCH.

(87)

FOR every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe, HEB. V. 13.

THE apostle, with some severity of expression, tells the Hebrews, or converted Jews, to whom he wrote, that instead of being capable of strong meat, or attaining to the perfection of christian doctrine, and being skilful in the word of righteousness, they chose to continue babes in knowledge; and, like children, had all their work to begin again. It is therefore a matter of the greatest importance to know what that word of righteousness is, in which they were unskilful, not having their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, truth and error. Let it only be observed, that they were looking back to the Law, and consequently in danger of returning to the point of justification by it, and that the design of this epistle was to keep them stedfast in the faith; and it will appear at once, that the righteousness which they were ignorant of, or ready to reject, is that of CHRIST, "who by one offering," the finishing act of his obedience, "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," HEB. X. 14. How many at all times, who have the name and appearance of well-grown Christians, are just such babes as the Hebrews were; and have the same need to be told that they are unskilful in the word, reason, or ground of a justifying righteousness, and exhorted to go on to perfection?

29 MARCH.

(88)

FOR our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power,
1 THESS. 1. 5.

By the Gospel, the Son of God and divine truths are revealed to us, by the Spirit they are revealed in us. External revelation by the word, and internal by the Spirit, are both necessary to salvation. Though Paul was separated from his mother's womb to be called by the grace of God, yet he had not an inward revelation of JESUS CHRIST to his heart, till he heard the external word of CHRIST with his ear, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" ACTS ix. 4. Hence learn to prize both the outward testimony of the word, and the inward testimony of the Spirit. The Gospel is a revelation of JESUS CHRIST, without which we could never have known, nor understood, that our sins are atoned by the blood, our persons justified by the righteousness, and our souls everlastingly redeemed and saved by the work of CHRIST. Is this knowledge by this revelation all that is necessary to salvation? No: persons may attain a notion of these things in the head, and understand somewhat of them, and yet the heart be without precious faith in, and peculiar appropriation of CHRIST, destitute of the love of CHRIST, and of any saving hope in him. Professor, look well to it: many have said, LORD, LORD, and have heard CHRIST preached in the streets, who little expected to meet with this rebuff from him, "I know not whence ye are; depart, ye workers of iniquity:" many heard the gospel preached in Thessalonica, but they alone were blessed, to whom it came "with power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

30 MARCH.

(89)

To reveal his Son in me, GAL. i. 16.

FROM hence begins spiritual life, a life from God, in God, with God, and to God. The chief glory of our souls is the revealing of CHRIST in us. O for the reviving comfort of this, while we consider it. To reveal CHRIST in us, is to make such a clear discovery of the matchless charms, and inestimable glory of his person to our souls, which we never saw before : so that our hearts are enamoured with him ; we choose him, love him, delight in him, and cleave to him in all his offices and characters. For by the eye of our soul we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, to us miserable sinners : hence he is the one beloved of our souls. Without this revelation of JESUS CHRIST in us, alas ! what is all external profession ? no more than mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery. O my soul, O my dear friends, be not content to live without a constant revelation of CHRIST to your souls. This makes the conscience peaceful, the heart happy, and the soul joyful. This inspires love, subdues lust, captivates the affections, makes the whole man happy in God, and creates heaven in the soul. If CHRIST is within in the heart, all will be right and well without in the life. If you believe in CHRIST as revealed in the word, this blessed promise is for you ; " I will manifest myself unto him," JOHN xiv. 21.

31 MARCH.

(90)

THE blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth us from all sin, 1 JOHN i. 7.

WHATEVER we do of ourselves, in answer to our convictions, is *covering*, not a *cleansing*: and if we die in this condition, unwashed, uncleansed, unpurified, it is utterly impossible that we should be admitted into the blessed presence of the holy God, REV. xxi. 27. Let no man deceive you with vain words. It is not the doing a few good works, it is not an outward profession of religion, that will give you an access with joy unto God. Unless you are washed by the Spirit of God, and in the blood of CHRIST, from the pollution of your nature, and from your actual transgressions, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 COR. vi. 9—11. Yea, you will be an horrible spectacle unto saints and angels, to yourselves, and to one another, when the shame of your nakedness shall be made to appear. If therefore you would not perish, and that eternally; if you would not perish, as base, defiled creatures, an abhorring unto all flesh, then, when your pride and your wealth, and your beauty, and your ornaments, and your duties, will stand you in no stead, look out betimes after that only way of purifying and cleansing your souls, which God hath ordained; "Without shedding of blood there is *no remission*," HEB. ix. 22. "The blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth *from all sin*." "Ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, *but with the precious blood of CHRIST, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,*" 1 PET. i. 18, 19.

I Do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth, GEN. ix. 13.

THE rainbow is a token of the covenant of preservation made with Noah, and with all the creatures of the earth; it is stable and sure: it may be considered also as an emblem of the covenant of grace, ISA. liv. 9, 10. or rather, it may be an emblem of CHRIST himself, REV. x. 1. as appears in many particulars. The rainbow appears then when the clouds are most disposed to wet, and returns after the rain; when we are afraid of the rain's prevailing, then GOD shews this seal of his promise that it shall not prevail; thus GOD obviates our fears when we weep for sin, and are afraid of a flood of wrath, by remembering the covenant of grace established in JESUS. The thicker the cloud, afterwards the brighter the bow in the cloud; so when afflictions abound, consolations do much more abound.—The bow appears when one part of the sky is clear, which intimates mercy remembered in the midst of wrath.—The rainbow is caused by the reflection of the beams of the sun, so all the glory of the covenant of grace and the significance of the seals, are derived from CHRIST the sun of righteousness.—The bow speaks terror, but this is without string or arrow, is directed upwards, and not to the earth. GOD looks upon the bow, to remember his covenant; so should we, that we may be mindful of the covenant of grace with faith and thankfulness.

GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world, GAL. vi. 14.

A TRUE believer has nothing to glory in, but CHRIST only. Even in his very best performances he will be often deeply humbled, and cry out, "LORD, enter not into judgment." And well he may; for the ground of our glory, comfort and salvation, is not in works, but in CHRIST, and the free grace of GOD; who for his Son's sake lays nothing to our charge, but richly and daily covers and pardons all our iniquities. And thus we may always be preserved in true and solid peace; for the cross of CHRIST is a true, solid and immoveable foundation.

When I survey the wond'rous cross,
On which the Prince of glory dy'd,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, LORD, that I should boast,
Save in the death of CHRIST my GOD;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood,

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
'That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all,

—*PURIFYING* *their hearts by faith,* ACTS xv. 9.

By faith in the Son of GOD we get an interest in his great and glorious salvation; we are justified by faith; we have peace with GOD by faith; this is an excellent grace, which brings us out of a state of slavery and sin, into the liberty of the sons and daughters of GOD, and will issue in everlasting salvation. Faith purifies the heart of man, naturally vicious, and is the root of holiness. Now, reader, examine yourself whether you be in the faith; try the tree by its fruits, ask yourself these questions: Has my faith a purifying influence on my heart? Does the view of CHRIST dying for my sins make me die unto them? Has my faith in CHRIST, as wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities, made me bitterly lament them, sincerely hate them, and vow to be the death of every one of them? Though there may be still much sin in me, is there none allowed? Is there none, no not one, no not that sin which does most easily beset me, which I desire to be spared and excused in? Do I rather look upon all sin as the enemy of CHRIST and my own soul, and as such, do I hate it with a perfect hatred? Am I praying fervently for divine grace to subdue it, and in the strength of that grace, do I maintain a constant and vigorous war with it, determined never to give it any rest in my heart, never to cease my conflict with it, till I have gained the compleat and everlasting victory.

HE shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root. Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit, ISA. xxvii. 6. They shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. chap. xxxvii. 31. They shall bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing, PSALM xcii. 14, 15. Her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit, JER. xvii. 8.

TRUE evangelical christians look upon themselves as the most barren trees, ever crying out, "O my leanness! my leanness!" Even before the judgment-seat of CHRIST they know of no fruits, MATT. xxv. 37—39 The reason is, they are poor in spirit, and are not pleased with their fruits, but only with CHRIST. O LORD, grant that I may desire earnestly and fervently to bring forth more fruits; and that I may grow in fruitfulness as I grow in years; so as to be ever green, and never ceasing from yielding fruits in my old age, fruits which may last to all eternity.

LORD, 'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In gardens planted by thine hand;
Let me within thy courts be seen,
Like a young cedar fresh and green.

There grow thy saints in faith and love,
Blest with thy influence from above;

Time, that doth all things else impair,
Still makes them flourish strong and fair.

Laden with fruits of age, they shew,
The LORD is holy, just and true;
None that attend his gates shall find
A God unfaithful or unkind.

THE breaker is come up before them ; they have broken up, and have passed through the gate ; and their King (as the author and finisher of faith) shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them, MICAH ii. 13. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, JOHN xvi. 33. HER. xii. 1, 2.

SOMETIMES the enemy seems to get an advantage over us, but the battle is not over yet. At last thou shalt have the victory, and carry the day for all that. In hard struggles remember the power of CHRIST, who in his resurrection broke through every thing. With him thou canst also break through, and be more than conqueror. Yea, in every conflict thou canst be sure of the victory beforehand ; for his victory is thy victory also. It is as impossible for thine enemies to keep thee always in bonds and subjection, as impossible it was that CHRIST could be kept in the grave by the stone, seal and keepers. Nay, the greater their force is, the more glorious will be the victory.

Hosanna to our conqu'ring King !
The prince of darkness flies ;
His troops rush headlong down to hell,
Like lightning from the skies.

There bound in chains the lions rore ;
And fright the rescu'd sheep ;
But heavy bars confine their pow'r
And malice to the deep.

Hosanna to our conqu'ring King !
All hail, incarnate Love !
Ten thousand songs and glories wait
To crown thy Head above.

Thy vict'ries and thy deathless fame
Thro' the wide world shall run,
And everlasting ages sing
The triumphs thou hast won.

6 APRIL.

(96)

BRETHREN, *I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, PHIL. iii. 13, 14.*

THIS is the declaration of the great apostle of the Gentiles, a man of the richest experience in the things of GOD; he is still stretching every power, exerting every nerve in the pursuit of his final happiness. And whoever engages in those difficult paths, must keep in perpetual motion; there is no stopping without losing ground. He must consider, that if his undertaking be glorious, it is also laborious; that he has a strong tide to stem, which, if he does not keep resolutely advancing, will inevitably bear him down the stream. Past experiences may encourage him, but must not make him secure; if the difficulties to be overcome be great, let him remember the prize of his high calling exceeds all value. He therefore whose noble ambition pushes him on in the pursuit of wisdom and virtue, must not be discouraged at their amazing height; nor must he think to rest upon the steep ascent of those aspiring mountains, which hide their lofty tops in heaven; whither we must climb before we can reach them, securely to sit down and enjoy eternal happiness and repose. O LORD, thou hast said, "They that wait on thee, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint;" I believe thy word, let it be fulfilled in me. Amen.

7 APRIL.

(97)

LET your moderation be known unto all men, PHIL. iv. 5. For charity, that is love, edifieth, 1 COR. viii. 1.

IF thou rebukest others, and wouldest have them to be like thee, thou oughtest to examine thyself first, whither it flows from a blind party-zeal, impatience, and self-will, or from a true principle of love; and whether thou art also much in prayer for them, both before and after. Who lays the long-sufferings of GOD truly to heart, and considers how gently he has treated him, and still treats him, like the weakest child, must needs be moderate also towards all men, and think, "If no body would bear with others, surely I must." LORD! give me the right spirit of meekness, to shew all lenity to my fellow-christians.

Watch o'er my lips, and guard them, LORD,
From ev'ry rash and heedless word;
Nor let my feet incline to tread
The guilty path where sinners lead.

O may the righteous, when I stray,
Smite, and reprove my wand'ring way!

Their gentle words, like ointment shed,
Shall never bruise, but cheer my head.

When I behold them prest with grief,
I'll cry to heav'n for their relief;
And by my warm petitions prove
How much I prize their faithful love.

H

8 APRIL.

(98)

PUT thou my tears into thy bottle ; are they not in thy book ? PSALM vi.
—Divine answer ; *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him, PSALM cxxvi. 5, 6.*

If thou canst reap yet, and sing the hymns of joy and triumph, remember that this belongs more to the future, than to this present world. Here sorrow and faith can be united. Thine enemies have not been and given thee over yet. There is no retreat from the field of battle before the hour of death. Let this be a check to thine impatient heart. But must thou be humbled under the sense of thy misery, so as to sigh, groan and weep very often : consider that this is the very seed for eternity. Not a single tear and groan will be lost. They are in the book of the LORD.

God counts the sorrows of his saints,
Their groans affect his ears ;
He has a book for their complaints,
A bottle for their tears.

The LORD can clear the darkest skies,
Can give us day for night ;

Make drops of sacred sorrow rise
To rivers of delight.

Let those that sow in sadness wait
Till the fair harvest come ;
They shall confess their sheaves are green
And shout the blessings home,

9 APRIL.

(99)

THE LORD hath heard my supplication, the **LORD** will receive my prayer.

The **LORD** also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble :
And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee ; for thou, **LORD**,
hast not forsaken them that seek thee. For the needy shall not always be forgot-
ten ; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever, **PSALM VI. 10.**
PSALM IX. 10, 11, 19.

WHOEVER would receive comfort from these words, must first be sensible of his poverty and misery, and shew it by confessing his sins, and feeling nothing in himself but indigence and unworthiness ; he must come with all his poverty to the rich Saviour, and first ask his forgiveness. The **LORD** will supply all his wants, however great his poverty and misery may be, and protect him, especially in time of need. And he will not forsake or forget him ; he may hope in him, and hope for the best from him ; for a suspicious heart always apprehends the worst ; neither his hope, nor his prayer, nor even a sigh will be lost. O my God, grant me faith, that I may say, the **LORD** heareth my supplication, the **LORD** receiveth my prayer. Praised be God, who hath not rejected my prayer, nor turned away his goodness from me, but is my protector, and my hope.

God hears when dust and ashes speak ;
He pities all our groans ;

| He saves us for his mercies sake,
And heals our broken bones.

LEAD us not into temptation, MATT. vi. 13.—Divine answer; God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it, 1 COR. x. 13. PSALM lxxvii. 2.

THE nearer to heaven, the higher the mountains, the deeper the valleys, and the sharper the conflicts. But be not discouraged! it is only for the trial of our faith. God gives also more strength, carrieth us through all, as he has done from the beginning, and suffers none to be ashamed who trust in him. Sometimes we may seem to be tempted above measure, and are afraid of being confounded; but far from it, it is quite impossible we should. Here thou hast the plain words of the LORD. Take hold on them, and wait his time; for since the world stands, none has been confounded in any thing who has waited for his promise; and surely he will not make thee the first instance of the failure of his word; by no means, PHIL. i. 10. ISAI. liv. 16. "Rather shall the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, says the LORD, that hath mercy on thee."

Our God, how firm his promise stands,
Ev'n when he hides his face!
He trusts in our Redeemer's hands
His glory and his grace,
Then why, my soul, these sad complaints,
Since CHAIST and we are one?

Thy God is faithful to his saints,
Is faithful to his Son.
Beneath his smiles my heart has liv'd,
And part of heav'n possess'd;
O! praise his name for grace receiv'd,
And trust him for the rest,

O Satisfy us early with thy mercy, PSALM xc. 14.—God's answer; Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, PSALM lxxxix. 10. For, my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, JER. xxxi. 14. The river of God is full of water, PSALM lxxv. 9. With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation, ISA. xii. 13. This is the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, ZECH. xiii. 1.

O SOUL ! keep close to the gospel ; there is the fulness here spoken of : food and raiment, and every thing in plenty. Let not the law hinder thee from eating, drinking, rejoicing, and adorning thyself, ISA. lv. 1—3, 10—12. The law, as one justly observes, brings in a great bill, but nothing wherewith to discharge it. It sets the soul a working, but so as to neglect the proper nourishment necessary for it. No wonder therefore, that she is destitute of sufficient strength ; that she faints, and never comes to the right mark. There is no such thing as making amends by the law : We must go directly to CHRIST, and receive first the grace and strength required, out of his fulness, by faith.

Let ev'ry mortal ear attend,
And ev'ry heart rejoice ;
The trumpet of the gospel sounds
With an inviting voice.

Rivers of love and mercy here
In a rich ocean join ;
Salvation in abundance flows,
Like floods of milk and wine.

Dear God ! the treasures of thy love
Are everlasting mines ;
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins.

The happy gates of gospel grace
Stand open night and day :
LORD, we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our wants away.

12 APRIL.

(162)

FEAR not, daughter of Zion, JOHN xii. 15. But greatly rejoice and shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king comes unto thee; he is just and having salvation, ZECH. ix. 9. For the LORD has taken away thy judgments, he has cast out thine enemy: The king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more, ZEPH. iii. 15. Behold they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake, ISA. liv. 15. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them, JER. xv. 19.

How strong soever thine inward enemies, thy corruptions may be now, fear not, and be not discouraged. So much the more faith, thy King is bound by his office, love and promise, to help and assist thee with strength to overcome: and thus shall even the hardships of a christian work together for his good in this world, according to the promise, and brighten his crown of glory in the world to come. O LORD, grant that I may be always faithful and resolute enough not to spend needlessly too much time in one conflict, but directly putting on the armour of faith, I may soon conquer, press forward, and experience thee every hour as a mighty King and Saviour.

My LORD, my Conqu'ror and my King,
Thy scepter and thy sword I sing;
Thine is the vict'ry, and I sit
A joyful subject at thy feet,

Great Prophet, let me bless thy name;
By thee the joyful tidings came,
Of wrath appeas'd, of sins forgiv'n,
Of hell subdu'd, and peace with heav'n.

13 APRIL.

(103)

THOU shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the LORD thy GOD did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt, DEUT. vii. 18. Be ye not terrified because of them, for the LORD your GOD is he that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you, chap. xx. 3, 4. Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, JOB xxxviii. 11.

THE assaults of original sin will ever return; and we must not be surprized, when one conflict is over, that another arises. This contest is unavoidable, for the enemy is within us. It makes us more careful and humble to know this, than if we believe that we had only to encounter with sin from without, and not from within: and if we desire to feel less evil in us than God suffers us to have; we may look to it, whether it proceeds not sometimes from pride and impatience, that we wish to get rid of the trouble of striving always against sin; whereas it should be enough for us that God suffers it, lays it not to our charge, and carries us through all dangers.

Let the redeemed of the LORD
The wonders of his grace record;
Israel, the nation whom he chose,
And rescu'd from their mighty foes.

He feeds and clothes us all the way;
He guides our footsteps lest we stray;
He guards us with a pow'ful hand,
And brings us to the heav'nly land.

14 APRIL.

(104)

VERILY thou art a GOD that hidest thyself, O GOD of Israel the Saviour, ISAI. xlv. 15. *All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth,* PSALM xxv. 10. *The LORD of hosts is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,* ISAI. xxviii. 29.

GOD is wonderful in all his doings, his ways are past finding out; at the end we can see best what wise and gracious steps he took with us. Therefore when things take such a wonderful turn that we are quite at our wits end, and do not know which way to go, we may believe the hand of the LORD is in it, and some good will come of it at last. As we experience the name of CHRIST to be wonderful at such times, we may well expect that he will shew himself to be our counsellor and mighty GOD also. At first every thing may seem to be against us, and go quite contrary; but at last we see plainly, that it was highly needful it should go contrary to our corrupt nature, and that thus it went well. For though the ways of GOD are marvelous, yet they are glorious.

Great GOD, I would not ask to see
What in futurity shall be;
If light and bliss attend my days,
Then let my future hours be praise.
Is darkness and distress my share?
Then let me trust thy guardian care;

Enough for me, if love divine
At length thro' ev'ry cloud shall shine.
Yet this my soul desires to know,
Be this my only wish below;
"That CHRIST is mine!" this great request,
Grant, bounteous God—and I am blest.

15 APRIL.

(105)

REMEMBER the sabbath-day to keep it holy. *I was in the Spirit on the LORD's day,* EXOD. XX. 8. REV. i. 10.

READER, I know not who, or what thou art, but may the GOD of all grace bless this meditation to thy soul ! Perhaps thou art a careless sinner, who to this day hast trifled with sabbaths ; how awful to have this added to thy other sins, to answer for at the bar of JESUS thy judge ! O cry to the LORD to be in the Spirit on his day ; then wilt thou see and feel thy malady ; look to JESUS for pardon, and sabbath-days will become precious to thy soul, perhaps thou art the self-righteous Pharisee, punctual in external services ; so far is praise-worthy ; but awful is thy mistake, if thou makest any external service the ground of thy acceptance, especially as the language of the day is, " *in the LORD have I righteousness and strength ;*" and so wilt thou say if in the Spirit.

Or thou mayest have been a splendid professor, but now a grievous backslider ; O may thou be " *in the Spirit on the LORD's day,*" then wilt thou look to GOD for pardon, to JESUS for fresh sprinklings of his blood, and to the Spirit for his quickening influences.

If thou art a believer under sharp trials, mayst thou be in the Spirit, then when tribulations abound, consolations will abound also. If thou art a believer walking close with GOD, rich in knowledge and experience, thou wilt wish to be in the Spirit, that grace may be magnified, JESUS more loved, and his name more honoured.

Reader, whatever thou art, whether master or servant, parent or child, if thou wishest to be in the Spirit, and wouldest have thy temporal and spiritual concerns prosper, make conscience of keeping the sabbath-day holy.

16 APRIL.

(106)

REMEMBER me, O my GOD, for good, NEH. xiii. 31.—Divine answer:
Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against
him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for
him: I will surely have mercy upon him, JER. xxxi. 29. A book of remem-
brance was written before him, for them that feared the LORD, and that thought
upon his name, MAL. iii. 16, 17, 18. I know the thoughts which I have
towards you, JER. xxix. 11.

As soon as I appear with my prayers before the LORD, he writes all
my petitions upon his book of remembrance. Should I not pray
much? Yes, O LORD; and though I have many things already upon
thy book, yet will I give thee occasion to write down more and more
every hour. Thus nothing can be forgotten. All will be granted by
him. Delays we must expect, but all shall be made up with so much
the larger gifts, in due time, though the best will be reserved for
blissful eternity.

Now let the LORD my Saviour smile,
And shew my name upon his heart;
I would forget my pains awhile,
And in the pleasure lose the smart.
My name is printed on his breast;
His book of life contains my name:

I'd rather have it there impress'd,
Than in the bright records of fame.

When the vast fire burns all things here,
Those letters shall securely stand,
And in the Lamb's fair book appear,
Writ by th' eternal Father's hand.

17 APRIL.

(107)

AND in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, ISA. XXV. 6.

A FEAST imports plenty, harmony and joy. Many feasts were appointed under the law, in commemoration of various deliverances and mercies. The gospel institutes one great perpetual festival, in consequence of the one grand blessing, which comprehends all other mercies, "Redemption by the blood of CHRIST." The table is always spread, the company are always welcome, the season is always pleasant, and the joy is always new. LORD, I once was feeding upon husks, upon ashes, upon the wind, and drinking down iniquity like water; but, O wonderful love, thou didst invite and bring me to thine own feast. Thou feedest me with the bread of life, and causedst me to drink of the wine of thy consolation. May I never more have an appetite for the vanities of the world.

Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room;
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?

'Twas the same love that made the feast,
That sweetly forc'd us in;
Else we had still refus'd to taste,
And perish'd in our sin.

18 APRIL.

(108)

AND he believed in the LORD, and he counted it to him for righteousness.
 GEN. xv. 6.

IT is no uncommon thing in scripture to put the act for the object ; especially with regard to faith and hope. Thus hope signifies the object of hope, JER. xiv. 8. 1 Tim. i. 1. HEB. vi. 18. And faith is often put for the object, or doctrine of faith, or that which is believed in ; as when it is said, Paul preached the faith which once he destroyed. And Felix heard him concerning the faith of CHRIST ; and when the scripture speaks of keeping, and contending for the faith, and holding the mystery of the faith, and the like. Thus when Abraham is said to believe in the LORD, the meaning is, he believed in the promise of God, that he should have a seed, and a very numerous one ; he believed that the Messiah would spring from his seed ; he believed in him as his Saviour and Redeemer ; he believed in him for righteousness ; and he believed in his righteousness as justifying him before God. It was not the act of his faith, but the object of it ; not the promise he believed, but what was promised, and his faith received even CHRIST and his righteousness ; see this explained fully in ROM. iv. verses 3, 10, 22, 23, 24.

Reader, mark well how Abraham was justified before God, not by faith as a work, but as apprehending CHRIST ; and follow this example of the father of the faithful. It is by faith in JESUS CHRIST alone that we can be justified before God ; by faith all the testament saints were justified, as well as the new ; that this distinguishes the Christian religion from all systems of morality, and to err in this is to err in the fundamentals of Christianity.

19 APRIL.

(109)

THIS do in remembrance of me, LUKE xxii. 19.

COME, my soul, obey thy dying LORD's command; let it be thy delight, as it is thy privilege, to attend thy master at table, to take a nearer view of his bleeding love, and, by a renewed act of faith, to secure to thyself the precious benefits contained therein. Stagger not through unbelief; it is a blessed truth, JESUS died for sinners; this is the foundation of a sinner's hope; let this encourage thee, O my soul; thou art a sinner, guilty and defiled; JESU's blood cleanses from all sin; he is the fountain opened for thy uncleanness; thou art by nature a child of wrath, condemned by the law, exposed to the curse; JESUS was made a curse for thee, and thou art become a child of grace; thou art unrighteous, unholy, JESUS is made of GOD unto thee righteousness and sanctification; thou art weak, beset with enemies, his strength shall be perfected in thy weakness, and thou shalt be more than conqueror through him that loved thee; thou art afraid of perishing at the last, look to JESUS, he purchased thee with his blood, he will not give thee up, none can pluck thee out of his hand.

Rise then, O my soul, and come to the banquet of love, and partake of the blessings of the everlasting covenant; he will manifest his love, will seal thy pardon, renew thy strength, and enable thee to travel the remaining part of thy pilgrimage, till thou come to Sion, and be admitted a welcome guest at the marriage-supper in heaven.

20 APRIL.

(110)

I Write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake; I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning; I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one, 1 JOHN ii. 12, 13.

GOD hath saints of several degrees and sizes, and some of them have more communion with him than others; from among the multitude he chose twelve to be with him; from among the twelve he chose three, Peter, James, and John, who were of the privy council; from among the three he chose out John as his peculiar darling, and bosom favourite, of whom it is said five times in St John's gospel, that "he was the disciple whom Jesus loved." So now at this day, GOD hath his babes, who live upon milk, and nothing else; "his children," who know their Father, and are assured of his love; "his young men," who go out to war; and the "fathers in Israel," whose grey-headed experience and wisdom abounds; for they know him from the beginning, and they remembered his words. It is a great mercy to be one of GOD's "little ones," yea, the least of all; to be a brother, though not of the first magnitude; to be a disciple, though not a John, nor one of the three, nor one of the twelve, nor one of the seventy. But to be a John, a darling, to lean on his breast, to lie in his bosom, O how great a mercy! It is a mercy to be a new-born, to be taken into the family of GOD, and household of faith; but to grow to a perfect stature, to be a man in CHRIST JESUS, O, how great a mercy! LORD, thou knowest my desire, perfect that which concerns thy servant, yea that which concerns thy servants.

It doth not yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Saviour here,
We shall be like our head.

We would no longer lie
Like slaves beneath the throne;
My faith shall abba father cry,
And thou the kindred own.

21 APRIL.

(III)

TAKE now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, GEN. xxii. 2.

ABRAHAM desired earnestly to see into the mystery of the redemption; and God, to instruct him in the best manner humanity is capable of receiving instruction, in the infinite extent of divine goodness to mankind, who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, let Abraham feel, by experience, what it was to lose a beloved son; "Take now thy son, thine only son, thine Isaac, the staff of thine age, the hope of thy family; none else do I require, and offer him up for a burnt-offering; and in this transaction see my love to sinners, when I will give up mine only Son JESUS, a sacrifice for them." Abraham obeyed, he virtually sacrificed his son; a ram was substituted in his place, and blessings are poured upon the faithful patriarch. In the whole story we have a lively type of greater things. We have seen the day when God spared not his own Son, when he was bound with cords, when he bore his cross, and on this mountain, probably on this very spot, was offered up an offering for sin; when he, triumphant over the grave, rose again to live for evermore, and sees the seed of his redeemed people, whom no man can number, and whose possessions are the glories of heaven and eternity.

And now, my soul, meditate on these things. Art thou a son of Abraham? Is there in thine heart a darling sin? draw forth the knife and smite it to the heart. Hath God not spared his Son for me, and shall I spare what he commands me to sacrifice? No, gracious Saviour, no. Help me to be faithful, to keep back nothing from thee; search the ground of my heart; when thou hast tried me, crown the faith thou hast bestowed, and the obedience thou hast wrought, with that unfading glory thou hast promised to them that are faithful unto death.

22 APRIL.

(112)

GOD, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with CHRIST, (by grace ye are saved :) and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS, EPH ii. 4—6.

CHRIST being our head, we, who are his members, are together with him dead, buried, raised up, and seated in heavenly places; for he is the new Adam, and has done all these things as our representative, in our stead, and for our good. Thus have I suffered in thee, O my glorious head, for all my sins already; I am discharged, I have no punishment to fear any more, respecting the guilt and curse of sin. Thou hast fully answered the charge against me, satisfied the infinite justice of God for me; and it is impossible with his equity and love to require a double payment of my debts. Consequently I die no more, since thou canst die no more; nay, I live already, and have my place with thee eternally in heaven, since the head cannot nor will never part, even with the weakest of his members, but influence and draw them after him wherever he goes.

O LORD, we praise thee for thy Son,
Who join'd our nature to his own:
Adam the second from the dust
Raises the ruins of the first.
By the rebellion of one man
Thro' all the seed the mischief ran;

And by one man's obedience now
Are all his seed made righteous too.
Where sin did reign and death abound,
There have the sons of Adam found
Abounding life; there glorious grace
Reigns thro' the LORD our righteous Lord.

GOD has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him, 2 COR. V. 21. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness, ROM. iv. 5.

THESE are very sweet and precious words to those who look upon their own best virtues and performances by nature as sinful, and upon their best condition by grace, as extremely weak and imperfect. How comfortable a thing is the justification of the ungodly by faith, when the soul is first stript quite naked before GOD, and thoroughly convinced of her wickedness and weakness. This a mere moral and legal man does not meddle with, He pretends to make amends for his former sins, by altering his course, and doing better works: but this is not making amends at all, since we are but unprofitable servants, and want continually forgiveness of sin, even when we have done all. We never have any reason to justify ourselves before GOD, though we should do ever so well, and suffer ever so innocently in regard to men. For from it there is but one way to be justified, and to obtain and preserve the blessing of a good conscience, which is, by humbling and confessing ourselves guilty, and looking only for forgiveness and righteousness in CHRIST. Thus we are made by him the righteousness of GOD itself. May the LORD put us all in this way.

No more, my GOD, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done ;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.
Yes, I must and will esteem
All things but loss for JESUS' sake ;

O may my soul be found in him,
And of his righteousness partake.
The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne ;
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my LORD has done.

24 APRIL.

(114)

GOD has exalted CHRIST JESUS with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins, ACTS V. 31.

THINK not, what reason have I to repent? I am no murderer or robber; for thou art both. By thy sins thou hast murdered the Son of God, and by thy pride robbed God of his own: therefore, if thy old heart is not changed yet into a new one, and thou feelest some uneasiness on account of thine eternal salvation, great care is to be taken not to mistake it for temptations of the devil; but believe me, that it is the work of CHRIST, who awakens thee, offers thee repentance, and will make thee quite another man. "He stands at the door and knocks; and if any man will hear his voice, and open the door, he will come in to him, and sup with him," REV. iii. 20.

Now CHRIST will ev'ry want supply,
And fill our hearts with peace;
He gives by cov'nant and by oath
The riches of his grace.

Our heart, that flinty stubborn thing,
That terrors cannot move,
That fears no threat'nings of his wrath,
Shall be dissolv'd by love.

There shall his sacred Spirit dwell,
And deep engrave his law,
And ev'ry motion of our souls
To swift obedience draw.

Thus will he pour salvation down,
And we shall render praise;
We the dear people of his love,
And he our GOD of grace.

GOD is not a GOD of confusion, 1 COR. xiv. 33. He has made every thing beautiful in its season. Also he has set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that GOD makes from the beginning to the end, ECCLES. iii. 11.

O LORD, I am like a little child, knowing neither the beginning or end of my ways; but thou being my counsellor, I think it my only wisdom to be advised and ruled by thee. O shew me then always thy way in all things, even in the least; that I may never miss to do thy work in due season and due order. Make me such a faithful steward, as not to go one inch from thy will; but on all occasions to act and suffer according to thy good pleasure.

Whether, O whether should I fly,
But to my loving Saviour's breast!
Secure within thy arms to lie,
And safe beneath thy wings to rest.

I have no might t' oppose the foe;
But everlasting strength is thine:
Shew me the way that I should go,
Shew me the path I should decline.

Which shall I leave, and which pursue?
Thou only my adviser be;
My God, I know not what to do,
But O! mine eyes are fix'd on thee.

Foolish, and impotent, and blind,
Lead me a way I have not known;
Bring me where I my heav'n may find,
The heav'n of loving thee alone.

26 APRIL.

(116)

NOW he who stablisheth us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, GOD; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, 2 COR. i. 21, 22. EPH. i. 14.

A SENSIBLE joy of faith, and great delight in prayer, are not the only evidences of this earnest and sealing of the Spirit; these sometimes are wanting: but we may know also we are sealed by these marks that we receive CHRIST in all his offices; that we have a sincere desire to do only the will of GOD in all things; that we hate sin irreconcilably; that we are humbled, convinced and led into all necessary truths by the Spirit. These are constant marks even for the weakest.

Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days?
Great Comforter descend, and bring
Some tokens of thy grace.

Dost thou not dwell in all the saints,
And seal the heirs of heav'n?
When wilt thou banish my complaints,
And shew my sins forgiven?

I

Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood;
And bear thy witness with my heart,
That I am born of GOD.

Thou art the earnest of his love,
The pledge of joy to come;
And thy soft wings, celestial Dove,
Will safe convey me home.

27 APRIL.

(117)

GOD be merciful to me a sinner, LUKE xviii. 13. *Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins, PSALM xxv. 18—Divine answer; The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, and of great mercy; the LORD is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, PSALM cxlv. 8, 9. Therefore, my son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee, MATT. ix. 2.*

JUSTIFICATION or remission of sins before the tribunal of GOD, and the comfortable assurance of it in the heart, do not always go together. The sentence of pardon may be passed, and the sense of it be wanting for a time, or consist only in some feeble glimpses now and then. The former is done all at once, in the most perfect manner; the latter is given by degrees, as far as believers are able to receive it: Therefore a penitent soul must converse much with the gospel, and pray continually for more light, and a greater degree of faith and peace.

O God of mercy, hear my call;
My load of guilt remove;
Break down this separating wall,
That bars me from my love.
Give me the presence of thy grace;
Then my rejoicing tongue

Shall speak aloud thy righteousness,
And make thy praise my song.
A soul oppress'd with sin's desert
My God will ne'er despise;
An humble groan, a broken heart,
Is our best sacrifice.

28 APRIL.

(118)

DELIGHT thyself in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart, PSALM xxxvii. 4.

IF thou desirest to delight thyself only in the LORD, and art more solicitous for the increase of faith, love and holiness, than temporal happiness; and wouldest even lose the latter, provided there was an addition to the former; this comes not from nature, but is an infallible mark of grace and regeneration; and the LORD shall give thee also the desires of thine heart, and even more than thou desirest.

Nothing can be more foolish, than to harbour one or more secret lusts in our hearts, after we have been once awakened. We must certainly suffer for it; our conscience will check us for it; we cannot enjoy it with half the pleasure as before; our course is hindered, and our peace disturbed. How much more prudent and profitable then would it be, to forsake all and follow CHRIST straight, who can only satisfy the desires of our heart! Consider this, O my soul! act the wiser part; let thy eye be single; cleave to him alone, when others cleaving to the creatures, pretend to serve two masters. Thus thou wilt be able to taste the kisses of his mouth, and the crystal stream of his comfortable and heavenly love.

Dear Saviour, let thy beauties be
My soul's eternal food;

And grace command my heart away
From all created good.

29 APRIL.

(119)

HEAL me, O LORD, and I shall be healed, JER. xvii. 14.—Divine answer; I am the LORD that healeth thee, EXOD. xv. 26. They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick, MATT. ix. 12. I have seen his ways, and will heal them, ISA. lxii. 18. chap. xlii. 3. and lxi. 1. He healed all that were sick, MATT. viii. 15—17.

THIS was an emblem of his power and grace, to heal all spiritual diseases of our souls, though ever so desperate and dangerous. Therefore give thyself only up to his cure, he understands thy distemper also, and will certainly restore thee. He has healed a great many already, nay all those who ever desired it, from all their infirmities. Thou canst never be too miserable and bad for him; he is ever willing and able to help. The worse thy case is, the more he will pity thee and have patience. Before we can be made whole, his way is to make us thoroughly sensible of our sickness, and lay our wounds more and more open. But as the physician then is most wanted, we must be the more earnest to implore his help, and he will surely bind us up again and heal us; though perhaps not at once, but sometimes slowly and wonderfully, yet thoroughly at last; for he heals ALL, even the most incurable diseases, PSALM ciii. 3.

Bind up, O LORD, and cheer my soul
With thy forgiving love;
O make my broken spirit whole,
And bid my pains remove.

Let not thy Spirit quite depart,
Nor drive me from thy face;
Create anew my vicious heart,
And fill it with thy grace.

30 APRIL.

(120)

CONFESS your faults one to another,— JAMES V. 16.

It is related of St John the evangelist, that being upon his return from Patmos to Ephesus, after the death of Domitian, he was set upon by a company of thieves, amongst whom was a young man their captain; to him St John applied himself, by way of wholesome counsel and advice, which took so good effect, that he became a new man, and was converted, and went thereupon to all his fellow thieves, and besought them in the name of JESUS CHRIST, that they would walk no longer in their former wicked ways. He told them withal, that he was troubled in conscience for his former wicked life, and earnestly intreated them, that as they tendered the welfare of their own souls, they would now leave off their old courses, and live more conscientiously for the time to come. The counsel was good, and well taken, so that many of those great robbers became great converts. Thus it is that one sinner's confession of his faults to another, may happily promote the conversion of one by the other. Hence it is, that the meaning of that apostolic precept, "*Confess your faults one to another,*" is made out by some interpreters to be, that those that have been partners together in sin, should go one to another, and seriously confess their sins each to the other; he that hath been a drunkard, or any otherwise a wicked liver, let him go to his companions in iniquity, and tell them that he is troubled in mind, because of his former excess, and perhaps he may be a means of converting them. Remember, art thou a converted man, follow this method, go to thy old companions, warn them of their danger, and thou wilt either be a means of converting them, or hereby wilt get rid of their troublesome company in future.

I MAY.

(121)

LORD, enter not into judgment with thy servant, PSALM cxlii. 2.—Divine answer ; *Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my voice, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life, JOHN v. 24. See also chap. viii. 51. ISA. xxv. 8.*

SINCE the judge himself is our Brother, our Bridegroom, the LORD of death and life, yea even our life ; believers cannot die any more, but “are passed from death unto life;” it being impossible that CHRIST should die again. He that owns the justice of God’s judgment, confesses himself guilty in all things, and appeals from the judgment-seat to the mercy-seat, him the LORD will own and justify again through the righteousness of his Son : For “if we would judge ourselves, we “should not be judged. We shall even judge together with CHRIST,” 1 COR. vi. 2. and surely we will not condemn ourselves ; much less will CHRIST : for he loves us more than we do ourselves.

Who shall the LORD’s elect condemn !
’Tis GOD that justifies their souls ;
And mercy like a mighty stream,
O’er all their sins divinely rolls.

Who shall adjudge the saints to hell ?
’Tis CHRIST that suffer’d in their head ;

And the salvation to fulfil,
Behold him rising from the dead.

Faith has an overcoming pow’r,
It triumphs in the dying hour ;
CHRIST is our life, our joy, our hope,
Nor can we sink with such a prop.

2 MAY.

(122)

GIVE heed to me, O LORD, JER. xviii. 19.—Divine answer; *Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep, PSALM cxxi. 4. Casting all your care upon GOD, for he careth for you, 1 PET. v. 7.*

THE care of the LORD, which he takes for his little ones, far and infinitely exceeds the care of the most tender mother over her weak and helpless child. Be I then never so weak, miserable and foolish in my own eyes, the LORD being the guardian of such babes, will have patience with me. Nay these are the very vessels of his grace. Therefore considering myself always as a weak ignorant child, I will keep close to him. He is the minister of the sanctuary, and will never let me want any thing, but defend, provide, and train me up in the best and most suitable manner,

Be thou my counsellor,
My pattern and my guide ;
And thro' this desert land
Still keep me near thy side.
O let my feet
Ne'er run astray,
Nor rove, nor seek
The crooked way.

Should all the hosts of death,
And pow'rs of hell unknown,
Put their most dreadful forms
Of rage and mischief on ;
I shall be safe,
For CHRIST displays
Superior pow'r ;
And guardian grace.

3 MAY.

(123)

THEY said unto the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world. If so be ye have tasted that the LORD is gracious,* JOHN iv. 42. 1 PETER ii. 3.

It is a great concernment to know that the scripture hath such a witness as experience, and that there is such a trade and correspondence as this betwixt the saints and the word; betwixt the believer and CHRIST, which lieth not in the common road of the world. O what an empty thing would religion be, if it had not this word experience in it, that secret, and sure mark whereby the christian knoweth the scripture is of GOD and his own interest in CHRIST, how thus the LORD hath often sealed his instruction in a dark plunge! O what an excellent interpreter is experience, taste and see! for thus the serious christian getteth a view of the scripture and spiritual things, which the most subtil and piercing eye of unsanctified schoolmen cannot reach, PSALM xxxiv. 8. and cxvi. 10. 2 TIM. i. 12. GAL. ii. 16. HEB. iv. 3.

This cannot be found in books; men will not meet with it in a throng of the choicest notions; it confoundeth the wise and disputer of this world, while the meanest and most simple christian understandeth it well to the satisfaction of his soul.

Reader, press after experience, live not by hearsay, and upon the comforts of others, but seek to the LORD that he would give thee this inward testimony; it will help thee in future trials; it will remove many of thy fears, make thy passage through life easy and comfortable, and be as a pledge of thy future glory.

*W*hosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me: for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it, MARK viii. 31, 32. LUKE ix. 23. Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple, LUKE xiv. 33.

THIS doctrine is discarded by all who call CHRIST Lord, Lord, but “do not the things which he saith.” The language of their heart is, “Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, ISA. xxx. 10. How different was that of the apostle! “So fight I, not as one that “beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, “I myself should be a cast-away,” 1 COR. ix. 27, 28. No cross, no crown: Let us not then be afraid of the cross; for when we bear it, it bears us; and when we refuse to take it up, we refuse the staff of every Christian pilgrim, and the weapon of every Christian soldier; we renounce the tree of life for that of knowledge; and practically “deny JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.”

Give me, O LORD, a sober mind,
A steady, self-renouncing will,

That tramples down, and casts behind,
The deadly baits of pleasing ill.

5 MAY.

(125)

WHAT things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them, MARK xi. 24. Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full, JOHN xvi. 23, 24. But ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea; let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the LORD, JAMES i. 6, 7.

HEROD promised with an oath to give the daughter of Herodias whatever she would ask, even to the half of his kingdom. How advantageous was his promise? But how much more so that of the LORD? "By myself have I sworn, says he, that in blessing I "will bless thee," GEN. xxii. 16, 17. When he bids us ask, he does not lay us under a restriction of not asking above half a kingdom. No; we may ask a whole kingdom; even the kingdom of heaven: nay, we may have the offer of two kingdoms; that of grace, and that of glory. Both are purchased for us by the blood of the Lamb; both promised to believers in the word of the gospel; and both actually bestowed, the former upon praying souls in the church militant, the latter upon praising souls in the church triumphant. If now we do not enjoy the kingdom of grace, righteousness, peace and joy in the holy Ghost, it is merely because we have not asked, or have asked amiss; that is, without faith, without patience, or in our own name, and not in the all-prevailing name of JESUS.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to CHRIST alone;

| Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, IT SHALL BE DONE.

6 MAY.

(126)

O LORD, *pardon mine iniquity, for it is great, PSALM XXV. II.—Divine answer; Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, ROM. V. 20. For GOD will abundantly pardon, ISA. LV. 7.*

IT is all one with GOD to forgive a repenting sinner his trespasses whether great or small; many or few; for they are all paid with one ransom. No sin, properly speaking, is little in itself; and none greater than the grace of GOD, and the infinite price laid down for it. Whatever sins therefore a man feels, yet he may throw himself upon the abounding grace of GOD. But this grace must always be our comfort to depend upon it alone, even when it is best with us; for then only it is best with us, when we depend alone on grace, and live in it in our element.

Why does your face, ye humble souls,
Those mournful colours wear?
What doubts are these, that waste your faith,
And nourish your despair?
What tho' your num'rous sins exceed
The stars that fill the skies;
And, aiming at th' eternal throne,
Like pointed mountains rise!

See here an endless ocean flows
Of never failing grace;
Behold a diving Saviour's veins
The sacred flood increase:
It rises high, and drowns the hills,
Has neither shore nor bound:
Now, if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can ne'er be found.

7 MAY.

(127)

HAVE mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am weak, PSAL. vi. 8. and strengthen me with strength in my soul, PSAL. cxxxviii. 3.—Divine answer; My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness, 2 COR. xii. 9. The LORD delights not in the strength of an horse, he takes not pleasure in the legs of a man: The LORD takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope for his mercy, PSALM cxlvii. 10, 11. The LORD, our Strength, mighty God and EMMANUEL, will give strength unto his people, PSALM xxix. 11.

WHEREIN the soul seems to be weakest, and has the greatest struggle with nature, she may be strongest through grace, and come off with a most glorious crown. Therefore judge, and despair not of overcoming by the power of God, be there ever so strong and obstinate enemies in thee or in others. I am weak indeed, but CHRIST is strong; I am poor, he is rich; I sick, he the physician of the sick; I a sinner, he the Saviour of sinners; consequently he suits me, and I suit him extremely well.

Let me but hear my Saviour say,
" Strength shall be equal to the day ;"
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace.
I glory in infirmity,
That CHRIST'S OWN POW'R may rest on me:

When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield, and CHRIST my song.
I can do all things, or can bear
All suff'rings, if my LORD be there ;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While his left hand my head sustains.

6 MAY.

(126)

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Why does your face, ye humble souls,
Those mournful colours wear?
What doubts are these, that waste your faith,
And nourish your despair?
What tho' your num'rous sins exceed
The stars that fill the skies;
And, aiming at th' eternal throne,
Like pointed mountains rise!

See here an endless ocean flows
Of never failing grace;
Behold a dying Saviour's veins
The sacred flood increase:
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Has neither shore nor bound:
Now, if we search to find our sins,
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Let me but hear my Saviour say,
 "Strength shall be equal to the day;"
 Then I rejoice in deep distress,
 Leaning on all-sufficient grace.

I glory in infirmity,
 That CHRIST'S own pow'r may rest on me:

When I am weak, then am I strong,
 Grace is my shield, and CHRIST my song.

I can do all things, or can bear
 All suff'rings, if my LORD be there;
 Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
 While his left hand my head sustains.

W Herewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me thy law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgments have I laid before me. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end, PSALM CXIX. 9, 18, 29, 30, 33.

THE old and the young cannot live irreproachably, without taking heed to the word of GOD; if they depart from that, they soon fall into error, and vicious courses; but if they make it their rule, then they must study it thoroughly, which cannot be done without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, for which they must diligently pray. For David considered his eyes as shut, how much more should we consider ours so, and pray, "Open thou mine eyes," &c. He who doth not fervently pray thus, is still blind, and hath not an eye; even though he should be deep in theological learning, and esteemed a profound divine. LORD, grant that we may see the wonders of thy Law and thy Gospel, and turn us out of the wrong way. Let thy judgments be always before us, as our guides, that we may choose the narrow path of truth, and steadfastly walk in it to the end: for this was David's request throughout this long psalm.

How shall the young secure their hearts,
And guard their lives from sin?

Thy word the choicest rules imparts,
To keep the conscience clean.

9 MAY.

(129)

TEACH me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies, PSALM xxvii. 11. Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: Unite my heart to fear thy name, PSALM lxxxvi. 11.— Divine answer; Good and upright is the LORD, therefore will he teach sinners in the way. What man is he that fears the LORD? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose, PSALM xxv. 8, 12.

O LORD, be pleased to fulfil this gracious promise in me also. Thou knowest that I have nothing so much at heart as to do thy will, and yet I am very often lost in darkness. I trust thou wilt do it. Here it is written; it is thy own word; I depend upon it. Thou hast many times accomplished the same already; and art willing and able to do it evermore, for thy own name's sake, and for my enemies sake. Thou being the God of my covenant, I keep close to thy words, which can never pass away, but are all yea and amen in CHRIST JESUS our LORD and Saviour. Amen.

I lift my soul to GOD,
My trust is in his name;
Let not my foes, that seek my blood,
Still triumph in my shame.
Sin and the pow'rs of hell
Persuade me to despair;
LORD, let me know thy cov'nant well,
That I may 'scape the snare.

The LORD is just and kind;
The meek shall learn his ways;
And ev'ry humble sinner find
The methods of his grace.
For his own goodness sake
He saves my soul from shame;
He pardons (tho' my guilt be great)
Thro' my Redeemer's name.

K

10 MAY.

(130)

TURN again our captivity, O LORD, PSAL. cxxvi. 4.—Divine answer
The LORD has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim
liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound
ISA. lxi. 1. For thus saith the LORD, &c. I will give thee for a covenant
to the people, &c. that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are
in darkness, Shew yourselves: they shall feed in the ways, and their pasture
shall be in all high places; they shall not hunger nor thirst, ISA. xlix. 8, 9
10. See also chap. xxxv. 10.

O LORD, I am hungering after the righteousness and freedom, not
only of faith, but of life and holiness also; not to please myself in
the latter, but that the evidence of the former may be so much cleared
by it to me, and I may be able to rejoice and take the comfort of the
righteousness alone, without deceiving my soul. Grant therefore, that
I may be truly filled, and may be strong, easy and free, so as not to be
kept any longer in any of the most subtil bonds, either of the law,
unbelief and a bad conscience, or of a carnal and worldly mind.

Bury'd in shadows of the night
We lie, till CHRIST restores the light;
Wisdom descends to heal the blind,
And chase the darkness of the mind.

JESUS beholds where Satan reigns,
Binding his slaves in heavy chains;

He sets the pris'ners free, and breaks
The iron bondage from our necks.
Poor helpless worms in thee possess
Grace, wisdom, pow'r, and righteousness.
Thou art our mighty all, and we
Give our whole selves, O LORD, to thee

HOW long wilt thou hide thy face from me, O LORD? PSALM xlii. 2.
 —Divine answer; For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee: for this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, ISA. liv. 7—9.

WHEN the LORD is pleased to quicken us in our prayers with a lively impression of one or more promises, we are apt to think that the hour of his help is come. But afterwards it may be, he not only hides himself for a great while again; but things take even such a strange and contrary course, as if all had been nothing, or as if nothing was more uncertain than the word of GOD, nay even GOD himself. They who deny such temptations, are strangers both to themselves and to the devices of Satan. But christians must then be prudently upon their guard, thinking that GOD is going to do some glorious things for them: for if they are first more convinced of their utter unworthiness, if they act faith and patience, and are more earnest in prayers, they are fit to receive so much more grace afterwards. Though yet, after all, GOD, as a sovereign, will give such measures of grace, at such seasons, and to such persons, as he pleases.

Dear LORD! behold our sore distress;
 Our sins attempt to reign;
 Stretch out thine arm of conqu'ring grace,
 And let thy foes be slain.
 If thou despise a mortal groan,
 Yet hear a saviour's blood;

An advocate so near the throne
 Pleads and prevails with Gon.
 How boundless is our Father's grace,
 In height, and depth, and length!
 He made his Son our righteousness,
 His Spirit is our strength.

12 MAY.

(132)

HOW long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? PSALM xiii. 2.—Divine answer; Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me, ISA. xlix. 15, 16. I will not leave you comfortless, JOHN xiv. 18.

WERE all our sins and afflictions so soon to be prayed away with a few words, whence these sad and repeated complaints of David? Why should God advise us to wait for him, and persevere in hope? And how could faith and patience be exercised? In our closets we may be lifted up with high speculations; seem to be strong, and able to leap over all the walls; but in great distress we see how dejected, and as it were despondent, our hearts are, PSALM xxx. 7, 8. But the LORD preserves us.

Can a woman's tender care
Cease toward the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee!

Mine is an unchanging love?
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath;
Free, and faithful, strong as death.

Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be;
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?

LORD, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love thee, and adore,
O for grace to love thee more!

13 MAY.

(133)

SHEW me thy ways, O LORD, and teach me thy paths, PSALM xxv. 4.

Shew me now thy way that I may know thee, EXOD. xxxiii. 13.—Divine answer; I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye, PSALM xxxii. 8. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest, EXOD. xxxiii. 14.

O LORD, suffer me not to deviate one inch from thy way, much less to fall away from thee, the true vine and fortress of my soul, by the plausible insinuations of my own brain and imagination. May I never run, before thou hast called me, to the hurt of my soul; but constantly and confidently abide in thee, always drawing first the necessary light and strength from thee by never ceasing supplications. Grant that my eye being fixed continually upon thee, I may be guided into all truth, my doings be attended with thy blessings, and my whole life be a constant progress towards heaven.

CHRIST'S answer:

"I will keep thee as the apple of mine eye, that no evil shall come near thee. As a careful mother watches over her child, so have I undertaken to teach thee my path, and guide thee with mine own eyes. Whatever faintings and failings may befall thee, yet will I be ever faithful, raising thee up again, and pushing thee on evermore in my ways. Nay, as a good shepherd, I will carry thee in my own arms, whenever thy increasing weakness shall require."

My honour is engag'd to save
The meanest of my sheep;

| All that my heav'nly Father gave,
My hands securely keep.

B*Y these, (books) my son, be admonished, ECCLES. xii, 12. But, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 PET. ii. 2*

NEW-BORN babes must not self-conceitedly be desirous of high things and strong meat. Such have more need experimentally to understand the first oracles of CHRIST, and taste the milk and saving power of the gospel. This would best make them grow in grace, and wean them from the world; since a sucking child esteems nothing else in comparison of its mother's breast; and those that delight more in lofty vain imaginations, than the Bible, do not follow the right spirit, and at last must come to their catechism again. For the more a christian is approaching to his end, and desires to be duly prepared for heaven, the more he walks in deep humility and godly simplicity, placing himself on the lowest bench of weak and little children. And thus they are the fittest vessels of grace; they will certainly be enlightened, and have the mystery of CHRIST revealed in their hearts, MATT. xi. 25.

There was an hour when CHRIST rejoic'd,
And spoke his joy in words of praise;
Father, I thank thee, mighty God,
Lord of the earth, and heav'n, and seas!
I thank thy sov'reign pow'r and love,
That crowns my doctrine with success;
And makes the babes in knowledge learn
The height, the breadth, and length of grace.

But all this glory lies conceal'd
From men of prudence and of wit;
The prince of darkness blinds their eyes,
And their own pride resists the light.
Father, 'tis thus, because thy will
Chose and ordain'd it should be so;
'Tis thy delight t'abase the proud,
And lay the haughty scorner low.

FOR *this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened, &c. EPH. iii. 14—16. read on to verse 21.*

THIS is a prayer, and a form fit to be used by ministers for their congregations, and by all christians for themselves: it may be used as a daily prayer; we should offer it up in faith, without apprehending that the favour we ask is too great. GOD will do exceedingly more for us, than we can either ask or understand: Whatever we ask, he will grant us still more; for though we are sinners, yet JESUS hath received gifts even for sinners, and to every one of us (*ver. 7.*) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST, that we may enjoy all things richly, CHRIST being rich towards all them that call upon him. O GOD, thou art our Father, reconciled to us in CHRIST; grant us therefore power, great power, according to the riches of thy glory, not according to the narrowness of our hearts. We stand in need of great power, for we have great enemies; strengthen us by thy Spirit in the inner man. LORD JESUS, do thou dwell in our hearts, and grant us to be rooted in thy love, that we may know it more and more, and that it may be shed abroad in our hearts, and that we may be filled with all the fulness of GOD.

To thee, my God, I daily sigh,
But not for golden stores;
Nor covet I the brightest gems
On the rich eastern shores.
Nor pleasure's soft enticing charms
My fond desires allure;

Far greater things than earth can yield
My wishes wou'd secure.
Those blissful, those transporting smiles,
That brighten heav'n above;
The boundless riches of thy grace,
And treasures of thy love,

16 MAY.

(136)

THY word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. *Stick*
lisp thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy law. Then shall I
not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Therefore,
remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.
I shall run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart,
PSALM CXIX. 11, 38. and ver. 6, 49, 32.

THUS gospel-comfort powerfully stirreth up to walk according to the
law; and the law urges evermore to lay hold on and make a right use
of the gospel, so as not to abuse it to security; which are both very
needful. For whosoever makes void and neglects the law, cannot but
make a wrong application of the gospel, and is in danger of either
being hurled into libertinism, following the bent of his own imagina-
tion; or, to his great punishment, falls under a heavy yoke of mere hu-
man inventions. May the LORD lead and keep us in the right way.

Laden with guilt, and full of fears,
I fly to thee, my LORD;
And not a glimpse of hope appears,
But in thy written word.
This is the judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail;

My guide to everlasting life,
Thro' all this gloomy vale.
O! may thy counsels, mighty God,
My roving feet command;
Nor I forsake the happy road
That leads to thy right hand.

17 MAY.

(137)

THROUGH the law I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with CHRIST, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me, GAL. ii. 19.

CHRIST being our head, in whom all fullness dwells, he will certainly fill all his members with life and strength, according to his promise, JOHN xiv. 19. "I live, and ye shall live also;" and chap. xvii. 3. "This is eternal life," &c. To know CHRIST, and God in CHRIST, as love, is true light and life; he that has this, has enough. O the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST! O LORD, teach me to know thee as the Bridegroom of my soul, that the law may not rush into my conscience, now thy bride-chamber, and condemn me any more. I am devoted to none but thee, ROM. vii. 4. Grant therefore that my whole heart and life, all my words and actions, may be governed only by a living faith on thee, that hast loved and given thyself for me.

Come, dearest LORD, descend and dwell
By faith and love in ev'ry breast;
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel
The joys that cannot be express'd.
Come fill our hearts with inward strength,
Make our enlarged souls possess,

And learn the height, and breadth, and length
Of thine unmeasurable grace.
Now to the God whose pow'r can do
More than our thoughts or wishes know,
Be everlasting honours done
By all the church, thro' CHRIST his son.

I Am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me, PSAL. cix. 22.
 Divine answer; I know thy poverty, but thou art rich, REV. ii. 9. For
 blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, MATT. v. 3.
 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him:
 your heart shall live for ever, PSALM xxii. 27. The LORD healeth the
 broken in heart, the LORD lifts up the meek, PSALM cxlvii. 3, 6. A bruised
 reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth
 judgment unto victory, MATT. xii. 20.

SUCH are the tender mercies of CHRIST towards the weakest of his
 people, that he supplies them from time to time with all proportionable
 strength, till at last they are able to gain a complete victory. As soon as
 therefore as we are sensible of our poverty, or miserable condition, and
 are truly desirous of grace and strength to overcome sin, we have receiv-
 ed actually some grace and spiritual life, and are delivered already from the
 jaws of hell: for there is no such feeling in dead souls; and in hell
 there is only a desire to be delivered from the punishment, but not
 from sin itself.

Bless'd are the humble souls, that see
 Their emptiness and poverty;
 Treasures of grace to them are giv'n,
 And crowns of joy laid up in heav'n.

Bless'd are the men of broken heart,
 Who mourn for sin with inward smart;
 The blood of CHRIST divinely flows,
 A healing balm for all their woes.

I Am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life, JOHN viii. 12. Therefore, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes, chap. xii. 35.

HE that is faithful, keeping ever close to CHRIST and his light, strictly watching and obeying the motions of his Spirit, will be evermore tender in conscience, and receive so much more light; consequently he will be from time to time more deeply rooted in repentance, faith and assurance, so as either to be preserved from many combats and disorders, or at least be carried sooner through the same. He may meet with dark valleys, (nature being, as it were, a great dark abyss, and grace sometimes as a small spark) yet by degrees it will blaze, and at last break through and enlighten all our darkness.

Is he a star? he breaks the night,
Piercing the shades with dawning light:
I know his glories from afar,
I know the bright, the morning star.

Is he a sun? his beams are grace;
His course is joy and righteousness;
Nations rejoice when he appears
To chase their clouds, and dry their tears.

Nor earth nor seas, nor sun nor stars,
Nor heav'n his full resemblance bears;
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him face to face.

O let me climb those higher skies,
Where storms and darkness never rise!
There he displays his pow'rs abroad,
And shines and reigns th' incarnate God

I Am the LORD thy GOD which teaches thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way which thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea, ISA. xlviii. 17, 18. Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me, REV. iii. 20.

How often, and how variously does the LORD knock at the door of our hearts? How clearly are his commandments held forth to us! But how seldom are we inclined to give him the hearing? Very often we are so distracted, that we can hardly observe his voice from the noise of worldly things in our senses, and are not at home, when he is pleased to take up his abode with us. Well, even now he is knocking by this. O let us open the door for him directly, since he desires nothing from us that might be grievous, but intends to make our hearts a glorious residence and banqueting-room of love, to fill it with heavenly goods, and to prepare and give us every thing with himself.

I'll bring him to my mother's home;
Nor does my LORD refuse to come
To Zion's sacred chambers, where
My soul first drew the vital air.

He gives me there his bleeding heart,
Pierc'd for my sake with deadly smart;

I give my soul to him, and there
Our loves their mutual tokens share.

I charge you all, ye earthly toys,
Approach not to disturb my joys;
Nor sin, nor hell, come near my heart;
Nor cause my Saviour to depart.

I Am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman; every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he takes away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me and I in you: he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, JOHN XV. 1—5.

O LORD, I trust that this word will have its accomplishment in me also; though as yet I have great reason to be humbled on account of my barrenness. Grant therefore that I may always abide in thee faithfully and quietly; since there is every thing in thy power, and nothing can be got and done by our own strength; but as it is thy will, and it tends both to the glory of thy Father and thine own, I depend upon being replenished in due season with fruits of righteousness. O suffer nothing in me which is to the dishonour of thy name, and which may be offensive to me and to others. But whatever thou thinkest as yet fit for me to suffer, let it work for my real good.

How can I sufficiently adore the patience of the LORD, my gracious husbandman, who will bears with me, the weakest of all his branches. He has not cut me off yet, but still dresses me to bring forth more fruit, though as yet I hardly yielded him one good, but a multitude of wild grapes. Why then shouldest thou grumble, O my heart, at the application of his pruning knife? It is really for thy good. He is angry only with the degenerate unfruitful branches. The more these are purged, the more fruit thou shalt bring forth.

Is CHRIST a vine? his heav'nly root
Supplies the boughs with life and fruit?

| O let a lasting union join
My soul to him the living vine!

I *Am glorified in them, I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,* JOHN xii. 10, 26, 27.

O GLORIOUS promise ! how could he love us more ? What blessed and intimate union is this ? O for such a faith that could always truly believe it ! CHRIST is the vine, believers are the branches ; he the bridegroom, we the bride ; he the head, we the members of his body of his very flesh and very bones, and consequently one body with him. And who ever hated his own flesh ? so in loving and cherishing us, he loves himself, EPH. v. 2^d, 29. Whenever he shall cease to love himself, then, and no sooner, shall he cease to love and cherish us also. It is his own delight to do us good, more than the mother that suckles her child.

LORD, what a heav'n of saving grace
Shines thro' the beauties of thy face,
And lights our passion to a flame !
LORD, how we love thy charming name !
When I can say, my GOD is mine,
When I can feel thy glories shine ;

I tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that earth calls good and great
Send comforts down from thy right hand
While we pass thro' this barren land
And in thy temple let us see
A glimpse of love, a glimpse of thee.

I Am weary with groaning, PSALM vi. 6.—Divine answer; He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength, ISA. xl. 29. I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul, JER. xxxi. 25. Therefore, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light, MATT. xi. 28, 30.

HERE CHRIST is commending his meekness, not so much as a pattern to be imitated, and does not properly promise his rest and comforts for our labour and humility, but to the coming and believing in him; to encourage the heavy laden souls not to be frightened, but draw near to him with confidence and boldness: he says, "I am not so rough and "proud as Pharisees and other men generally are towards offenders; "but meek, lowly in heart, full of compassion and willing to receive, "to forgive and comfort them." Come therefore to him, O sinner, with all thy loads of sin and misery, he will in no wise cast thee out, but receive thee gladly.

Come hither, all ye weary souls,
Ye heavy-laden sinners, come;
I'll give you rest from all your toils,
And raise you to my heav'nly home.
Bless'd is the man whose shoulders take
My yoke, and bear it with delight;

My yoke is easy to his neck,
My grace shall make the burden light.
Jesus, we come at thy command,
With faith and hope and humble zeal,
Resign our spirits to thy hand,
To mold and guide us at thy will.

24 MAY.

(144)

I Have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, PSALM CXIX. 176.
GOD's answer; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out, I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away: and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. EZEK. XXXIV. 11, 16. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, &c. ISA. XL. 11.

HE that is wise in his own conceit, as many of our philosophers does not pray like David in this place, therefore he continues, with all his proud wisdom, in his natural errors and foolishness. But thou hast given me, O thou good Shepherd, to know and understand my lost and helpless condition; and I cannot find or advise myself any thing, like a sheep which is gone astray; I beseech thee to seek, heal, lead, feed, carry and strengthen me also, as I stand in need and seems good to thee; that I may be able to say with David, "THE LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want."

My shepherd will supply my need,
JEHOVAH is his name;
In pastures fresh he makes me feed,
Beside the living stream.
He brings my wand'ring spirit back,
When I forsake his ways;

And leads me for his mercies sake,
In paths of truth and grace.
The sure provisions of my GOD,
Attend me all my days;
O may thy house be mine abode,
And all my work be praise.

I Am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, GENESIS xxxii. 1c. Who am I, O LORD GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? SAM. vii. 18.

A SOUL truly humbled through afflictions highly esteems the least favour, and judges itself utterly unworthy of it, looking upon every thing as a free gift only for JESUS CHRIST's sake. Now, O my dear Father! it is true, in myself I deserve none, no, not the least of thy mercies; but as thou hast thought me more worthy, and given me thine own Son, who hath purchased all again, and paid a great price for them; yet I firmly believe, that goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

Now to the pow'r of God supreme
Be everlasting honours giv'n;
He saves from hell, (we bless his name)
He calls our wand'ring feet to heav'n.

Not for our duties or deserts,
But of his own abounding grace,
He works salvation in our hearts,
And forms a people for his praise.

'Twas his own purpose that begun
To rescue rebels doom'd to die:
He gave us grace in CHRIST his Son,
Before he spread the starry sky.

JESUS the Lorn appears at last,
And makes his Father's counsels known;
Declares the great transactions pass'd;
And brings immortal blessings down.

I Beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, ROM. xii. 1, 2.

THIS, in conjunction with the word of God and serious prayer, is the best means to know the will of God. The neglecting of it and using other means, is tempting God and exposing ourselves to the temptations and siftings of the wicked one. We may think ourselves to be divinely convinced by faith of the will of God, though we follow our own imaginations, and spoil the best of our actions. Self-will generally takes quick resolutions, and has a great deal of assurance: whereas God very often leads his people blind, and takes methods quite different from ours. "Who therefore believes shall not make haste," ISA. xxviii. 16. But be very careful that he does not mistake self-will for plausible representations for divine convictions and assurances of faith; always first examining himself first; whether his body, soul, will and affections, are entirely offered to the good-will and pleasure of God; for the only true service which God delights in is the sacrificing our whole selves to him at all times, and not only at church, but in other places; that we do not conform to the world, but be daily transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Tho' list'd eyes salute the skies,
And bended knees the ground,
Yet God abhors the sacrifice,
Where the truth is not found.

LORD, search my thoughts and try my ways
And make my soul sincere:
Then shall I stand before thy face;
And find acceptance there.

27 MAY.

(147)

I Will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels, ISA. lxi. 10.

IN vain dost thou dress up and adorn thyself, O my soul, before thou approachest CHRIST. To him thou must come, filthy, naked and miserable as thou art; he will clothe and adorn thee himself; and in this ornament alone thou shalt rejoice. For the very best of our robes and performances are not without spots, but still want to be washed in the blood of CHRIST, and covered with this ornament, REV. vii. 14. This and this alone is the way to enjoy and maintain true peace. This will enable us to rejoice that our names are written in heaven.

Awake my heart, arise my tongue;
Prepare a tuneful voice;
In GOD, the life of all my joys,
Aloud will I rejoice.

'Tis he adorn'd my naked soul,
And made salvation mine;
Upon a poor polluted worm
He makes his graces shine.

The Spirit wrought my faith and love,
And hope, and ev'ry grace;
But JESUS spent his life to work
The robe of righteousness.

Strangely, my soul, art thou array'd
By the great sacred Three!
In sweetest harmony of praise,
Let all thy pow'rs agree.

28 MAY.

(148)

I Have sinned against the LORD.—Divine answer; *The LORD also has put away thy sin, thou shalt not die, 2 SAM. xii 13. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, 1 COR. xi. 31.*

He that with unfeigned repentance accuses and judges himself, accounting his own righteousness and best doings as filthy rags, will soon receive grace, pardon and remission of all his sins at once, though chastisement may follow; for grace is not divided as gifts are. God, through CHRIST, receives the whole person of a penitent sinner into his favour, forgiving both original and actual sins in one instant; so that either none or all are forgiven: not one, even the least, is forgiven only on account of our repentance (as some vainly imagine) without the blood of CHRIST; but by this all, even the most heinous, are taken away; for the blood of CHRIST cleanses us from all sins, 1 JOHN i. 7.

Shew pity, LORD, O LORD forgive;
Let a repenting rebel live:
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?

My lips with shame my sins confess,
Against thy law, against thy grace:
LORD, should thy judgment grow severe,
I am condemn'd, but thou art clear.

Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.

My crimes are great, but don't surpass
The power and glory of thy grace;
Great God, thy nature has no bound,
So let thy pard'ning love be found!

29 M
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29 MAY.

(149)

HAVING the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, EPH. iv. 18, 19.

If a man be naturally dead, bring a candle into the room, he sees it not; let the sun shine in his face, he perceives not the beauty, nor feels the warmth thereof; offer him rich presents, he receives them not; he hath no eye to see them, no heart to desire them, no hand to reach out unto them. Thus it is with one that is spiritually dead, let the sunshine of the gospel blaze out never so clear, he sees it not, because he is in darkness; though he live under plentiful means, and rich dispensations, yet he is blind and sottish; offer unto him the rich pearls of the gospel, those rich treasures of grace in CHRIST JESUS, yet he hath no heart to them, no hand of faith to lay hold upon them; so blind so sottish, so stupid and senseless is he, that though these rich treasures, these graces, these pearls of the gospel, be conveyed unto him in earthen vessels, in a plain and familiar manner, yet he doth not, he cannot apprehend them; judgments do not affright him, and mercies cannot allure or persuade him; yet this creature is all life in the element of sin, he loves it, he pleads for it, he commits it with greediness. This is St Paul's account of the unconverted gentiles; and how many such have we under a Christian name? O LORD, exert thy great power, quicken all that are thus dead in trespasses and sins; "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to thine own self." Amen.

30 MAY.

(150)

I Wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, PSALM CXXX 5.—God's answer

They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall wait and not faint, ISA. xiv. 31. For the LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him, LAM. iii. 25.

WHEN we have prayed, we must remember to wait also; for it is not only an express command, but very acceptable to the LORD. The more we wait and are instant in prayer, so much more will he give. Nay, he always hears and grants our petitions directly, and lays them up for his children; but that we may not abuse them, he gives the enjoyment only when it is most needful. Therefore we may confidently say, such and such gifts I have, since I have prayed for them: They are actually laid up for me, and the use and benefit thereof I shall receive in due season, especially in death and in eternity.

My spirit looks to God alone;
My rock and refuge is his throne;
In all my fears, in all my straits,
My soul on his salvation waits.

Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways,
Pour out your hearts before his face;

When helpers fail and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.

For sov'reign pow'r reigns not alone,
Grace is a partner of his throne:
Thy grace and justice, mighty Lord,
Shall well divide our last reward.

31 MAY.

(151)

IN the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul,
PSALM xciv. 19. See also 2 COR. i. 3—5.

A MAN without afflictions places his trust and seeks his comforts chiefly in temporal things; he is full of earthly desires, and the true image of vanity; whereas we can never taste the sweet comforts of the word of GOD so well as under the burden of the cross. There our spirits sometimes enjoy more rest and joy than if we were without it, for then that word is fulfilled which CHRIST says, MATT. xi. 30. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Thus our hearts are set against the world, reconciled to heavenly things, and easily disunited from many idols, which were impossible to deny and forsake before. Well then may we bear this salutary burden, which will certainly end, and who knows how soon, in eternal glory and rest. And as the LORD will also give patience and strength sufficient for the day, so as to be never tempted above measure, there is abundant reason again to say, that his burden is light indeed.

'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,
For pride is apt to rise and swell;
'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,
That I might learn his statutes well.

Father, I bless thy gentle hand;
How kind is thy chastising rod,
That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
And brought my wand'ring soul to God?

1 JUNE.

(152)

I Determined not to know any thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified, 1 COR. ii. 2. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, &c. PSALM CXI. 10. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated; full of mercy and good fruit, without partiality and without hypocrisy, JAMES iii. 17. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifies, 1 COR. viii. 1.

CHRIST crucified, and he alone, is the power and wisdom of God; him all christians, and especially divines, should make their particular practice to study well. Were our faith built on human wisdom, then surely carnal philosophers would be the greatest believers; whereas they are sometimes the worst infidels, or at best the most silly and faithless people in times of distress. And besides, their being puffed up, is another evidence that they have not the true wisdom; for the wisdom from above is only with the lowly and babes, who pray for it earnestly, PROV. xi. 2. MATT. xi. 25. What would all knowledge avail us then, without the knowledge of CHRIST? One spark of pure love yields more power than all the stores of empty human learning. May the Lord JESUS shed his love abroad in my heart; him have I determined only to know; his love at the cross I account for my greatest wisdom and glory.

They that would grow divinely wise,
Must with his love begin;

Our fairest proof of knowledge lies
In hating ev'ry sin.

2 JUNE.

(153)

I Will not let thee go except thou blest me, GEN. xxxii. 12. *Forfake me not, O LORD, O my GOD.* PSALM xxxviii. 22.—Divine answer; *Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of,* GEN. xxviii. 15. *I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight,* EXOD. xxxiii. 12. *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,* HEB. xiii. 5.

GOD will have me to be faithful, and should not he be so himself? Am I to trust in his word, then surely he will not forsake me, but be as good as his word. Heaven and earth must pass away, but his word will not: He is ever faithful. If I do not believe this, I believe no God at all; but if I truly believe him to be faithful, I believe enough. This is what he only desires; and if I really do, my faith will not be moved even in the hottest trials; the Word will hold me up, though I receive it even in weakness.

Begin, my tongue, some heav'nly theme,
And speak some boundless thing;
The mighty works or mightier name
Of our eternal King.

Tell of his wond'rous faithfulness,
And sound his pow'r abroad;
Sing the sweet promise of his grace,
And the performing God.

Proclaim salvation from the LORD
For wretched dying men;
His hand has writ the sacred word
With an immortal pen.

Engrav'd as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines;
Nor can the pow'rs of darkness 'rase
Those everlasting lines.

3 JUNE.

(154)

I Say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, MATT. xii. 36. See also EPH. iv. 29. chap. v. 4.

HERE all corrupt communication, jesting, foolish talking, or whatever is not convenient and good to the use of edifying, is plainly forbidden. But who truly believes the report and the truth of these awful words? Surely the world does not believe them at all: this is quite plain, from that very common and shocking practice and custom of judging, lying, swearing, jesting, and talking all manner of filthiness; yea, even religious people very often do not believe and consider them enough. How many heedless, slanderous, idle and unprofitable words are sometimes spoken by these? Be therefore careful, O my reader, to weigh every word, and to make light of none, for each will increase thine account. Whenever ye are going to speak, let the question be first, Is it needful to speak? does it tend to the glory of God? will it profit me, or others? O LORD grant, that never an idle word may drop from my lips. Whenever I am to converse with others, give me grace first to converse with thee by secret prayer. In all companies let thy presence be before mine eyes, always looking upon thee as the chief person in the place, and receiving direction when and what I am to speak. May thy good Spirit always teach me, and sanctify all my thoughts and words.

4 JUNE.

(155)

LET every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called, 1 Cor. vii. 20.

Most of the employments of life are, in their own nature, lawful; and all those that are so, may be made a substantial part of our duty to God, if we engage in them only so far, and for such ends as are suitable to beings that are to live above the world. This is the only measure of our application to any worldly business, it must have no more of our hands, our hearts, or our time, than is consistent with an hearty, daily, careful preparation of ourselves for another life. For as all christians, as such, have renounced this world, to prepare themselves, by daily devotion, and universal holiness, for an eternal state of quite another nature; they must look upon worldly employments, as upon worldly wants, and bodily infirmities; things not to be desired, only to be endured and suffered, till death and the resurrection has carried us to an eternal state of real happiness. A person's being called into the kingdom of grace, is not designed to make void the duties that result from the several situations of secular life, but to enforce the practice of them in such a way as may be most to the glory of God. He therefore that does not consider the things of this life in this point of view, as little, or nothing in comparison of the things that are eternal, cannot be said either to feel, or believe the greatest truths of christianity.

5 JUNE.

(156)

AND the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day, ISAIAH ii. 17.

“PRIDE was not made for man,” says the son of Sirach; and, “the proud in heart are an abomination to the LORD;” and yet what more common than pride and self-righteousness among the fallen children of Adam? So deeply are they engrafted in our corrupt natures, that nothing short of almighty grace can root them up.

It is the great design, and effect of the blessed gospel, wherever it is applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, to mortify this cursed temper. In that day the haughtiness of man, his self-will, which he set up in opposition to the will of God, shall be brought down; and his self-righteousness, by which he thought to recommend himself to the favour of God, shall be made low; and CHRIST, and his righteousness alone, shall be exalted.

Hath this precious promise ever been fulfilled in thy experience, O my soul? Is the will of God thy rule? Is the righteousness of CHRIST thy hope? And is the language of thy heart and life, Let God in all things be exalted in me and by me through CHRIST JESUS? Without this, O my soul, thy profession is vain, thy faith is also vain, and thou art yet in thy sins.

6 JUNE.

(157)

I Know also, my GOD, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness, 1 CHRON. xxix. 17. He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly, PROV. xi. 8. The LORD looks on the heart, 1 SAM. xvi. 7.

SINCE GOD cannot be deceived with a mere outward form, though ever so fine; it is not an infallible proof of a sincere, real conversion, if a man has reformed only the grosser sins of his former life, much less if he only abstains from such things which by nature he is not so much inclined to: but if our hearts are changed, and especially in those things we have the strongest propensity to, this is an infallible evidence of a true conversion. For these inward capital enemies, the LORD and all his upright followers attack most, before all the rest. But if thou wouldest give over that which is dearest to thee, thou must know and believe first, "that CHRIST loves thee." These thoughts we must prosecute, though all other things should be forgotten.

Mistaken souls! that dream of heav'n,
And make their empty boast
Of inward joys and sins forgiv'n
While they are slaves to lust.
Vain are our fancies, airy flights,
If faith be cold and dead;
None but a living pow'r unites
To CHRIST the living head.

'Tis faith that changes all the heart;
'Tis faith that works by love;
That bids all sinful joys depart,
And lifts the thoughts above.
Faith must obey her Father's will,
As well as trust his grace;
A pard'ning GOD is jealous still
For his own holiness.

7 JUNE.

(158)

I Will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths; and she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them and not find them; then shall she say, I will go and return unto my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.
HOSEA ii. 6, 7.

As it is only with thee, O my dear Saviour, that I can be happy, I would never leave thee any more: and that I may not give thee the slip unawares, even under good pretences I desire to have my way well hedged up, and be encompassed every where with thorns. Let me quickly discover, and crucify every thing which can in the least disturb me in the enjoyment of thy love, that I may always closely walk with thee alone; and never let me go one inch out of thy way, for fear of running myself into the thorns, and bringing unnecessary sufferings upon me; though I do not mean to avoid the cross of CHRIST in other respects, but would willingly submit to any sufferings, which are never without good fruit.

Glory be to thee, O my blessed Saviour, that thou hast not given me up yet, and forsaken me to run into destruction in my own ways. O be pleased to restrain me evermore, and whenever I am in danger to slide out into the broad way, grant that I may not find any rest till I am brought back again, should it even be by means of the pricking thorns of afflictions.

I know thy judgments, LORD, are right,
Tho' they may seem severe;
The sharpest sufferings I endure
Flow from thy faithful care.

Before I knew thy chast'ning rod,
My feet were apt to stray;
But now I learn to keep thy word,
Nor wander from the way.

8 JUNE.

(159)

AND he said, *Art thou my very son Esau?* And he said, *I am,* GEN.
xxvii. 24.

THERE are certainly some palliating circumstances in this affair, yet they are far from being sufficient to exculpate either Jacob, or his mother. The case may be thus stated: It cannot be denied on the one hand, but that both Jacob and his mother, were justly to be praised for having a due esteem of the paternal benediction; and for their endeavouring to attain it; since this could proceed from no other motive, but a full persuasion of the truth of God's promises and covenant with Abraham. And thus, from the consideration of the goodness of the end, and of Jacob's title to the blessing, as an appendage to the birth-right, the preordination of God, and Isaac's approbation of the thing, when done, may be drawn some arguments to alleviate their crime. But on the other hand, it must be confessed, that the means used to attain their ends were highly criminal. Rebecca was wrong in her advice to her son, and he was wrong in following it; for though God, before he was born, designed him to inherit the blessing; yet he ought to have waited until the divine wisdom opened the way, and not have anticipated God, and procured the blessing by an irregular act of his own. Besides, both of them, by this act, presumed to limit the power of God, by thinking that a complication of frauds was necessary for the accomplishment of the divine predictions.

9 JUNE.

(160)

—**L**EST any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, HEB. iii. 13.

DOTH sin present itself, look upon it, as it must be, with tears, or shall be in torments; if thou committest sin, and diest impenitent, thy soul is lost, and thy redemption ceaseth for ever; or if thou committest sin, and dost repent, yet what cloudings of the face of God! what breaking of the bones, with David! what bitter pangs! what painful throes! what shadows of death! what terrors of hell may sieze upon thee, before thou canst make thy peace, or settle thine assurance! Wilt thou give way to sin, because it is delectable? or because it is pardonable? who loves poison because it is sweet? or who drinks poison because he may have an antidote? seeing it will work to his trouble, if it work not out his life! I have a precious soul, shall I lose it for a lust? I have a gracious God, shall I venture him for a sin? No, **LORD**, give me grace to resist sin, give me victory over it; let me always reject that, for the indulgence of which I am sure to lose my peace, and endanger the loss of my immortal soul.

10 JUNE.

(161)

THIS is he that came by water and blood, even JESUS CHRIST; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. He that believeth on the Son of GOD, hath the witness in himself. And this is the record, that GOD hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life, 1 JOHN V. 6, 10—12.

JESUS came with water and blood, not with water alone, with his holy Spirit, to sanctify us; but also with his blood, that he might first expiate our sins. We should therefore, first of all penitently seek, and obtain remission of sins in his blood; then may we hope to obtain the water of life, the holy Ghost, for our inward purification and sanctification. And this holy Spirit will bear witness within us, that the Spirit, or the law of the Spirit, the Gospel, is truth; that GOD will fulfil his word; and as he hath promised us, will give us everlasting life. We have three witnesses of it in heaven, and three on earth. And if we believe in CHRIST, we have this true testimony in ourselves; and may therefore assuredly know, that, "having the Son of GOD, we have life, eternal life; for he is, according to ver. 20. life eternal;" and consequently, being in him, we are already entered into everlasting life.

Let all our tongues be one,
To praise our GOD on high;
Who from his bosom sent his Son,
To fetch us strangers nigh.
My Saviour's pierced side
Pour'd out a double flood;

By water we are purify'd,
And pardon'd by the blood.
It cost him cries and tears,
To bring us near to GOD!
Great was our debt, and he appears
To make our payment good.

M

AND no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, which is in heaven, JOHN iii. 13.

No mere man whatsoever has entered, or can enter into the secrets of God's being in heaven, relating to the great mysteries of salvation, so as immediately and perfectly to understand them, and make them known to others; but this privilege is peculiar to the Messiah, who is spoken of under the character of "the son of man," PSALM lxxv. 17. and DAN. vii. 13. and always had an existence in heaven as the Son of God; and who came from thence into an incarnate state, that he might reveal God's counsels to man. As many are perplexed about the divinity of CHRIST, the following note may help them to conceive of that matter more properly. As the divine and human natures were united in the person of CHRIST, attributions are made of the properties of one nature to him, whilst he is spoken of under a title which relates to his other nature. Thus, when it is said, 1 COR. ii. 8. "The LORD of glory was crucified;" and ACTS xx. 28. he is called "God, who purchased the church with his own blood;" the meaning is not, that he, as the LORD of glory was crucified, or, as God, shed his blood; as if the divine nature could be crucified and bleed; but that the person, who was the LORD of glory in one nature, was crucified in the other, &c. So when it is said, "the Son of man is in heaven;" the meaning is not, that he, as the Son of man, was there whilst he was on the earth; but that he, who was here in his human nature, was there in his divine.

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12 JUNE.

(163)

I Will perform my good word towards you; for I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then you shall pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find me: I will turn away your captivity, *JER. XXIX. 10, 11, 13.* For the word of the LORD is right; for he spoke and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast, *PSALM XXXIII. 4, 9.*

WERE it so light a matter to rely on the faithfulness of God in times of distress, what need to give us so many and various promises? If our faith be right, we must also endure and wait his time with patience, which certainly is not an easy task; since the promise of the LORD not only tarries very often, but sometimes even the counterpart will happen, that providence goes quite contrary to the word, and seems as if it could not be true at all. And then we must remember that these are the very ways and methods of God, which have ever been in the deep, and acted contrary to our expectation. This the corruption of our nature requires; and the wisdom of God ever chooses first to help us inwardly, and prepare us to a right use of his outward helps and favours; and thus we receive always a double blessing at once from his hands.

Who shall pretend to teach him skill?
Or guide the counsels of his will?

His wisdom, like a sea divine,
Flows deep and high beyond our line.

13 JUNE.

(164)

BEHOLD, *I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and feed her comfortably unto her, Hos. ii, 14. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages, CANT. vii. 11.*

O LORD, the world is nothing to me but a wilderness, a place of tribulation, where, being daily tossed to and fro, I enjoyed no rest; whenever I lifted up my heart and looked for peace in thee by prayer, thou hast always spoke comfortable things to me, and even carried me safe through all outward distresses. Grant that by this I may be strengthened for the time to come, when I am at a loss again what course to take. Let me always firmly believe thee to be a perfect help in all things, who art willing and able to carry me further through ever so many and great troubles and oppositions, till I shall be safely arrived at the ports of heaven.

LORD, what a wretched land is this,
That yields us no supply,
No chearing fruits, no wholesome trees,
Nor streams of living joy?

But pricking thorns thro' all the ground,
And mortal poisons grow;
And all the rivers that are found,
With dangerous waters flow.

Yet the dear path to thine abode
Lies thro' this horrid land:

LORD! we would keep the heav'nly road,
And run at thy command.

Our souls shall tread the desert thro'
With undiverted feet;
And faith and flaming zeal subdue
The terrors that we meet.

14 JUNE.

(165)

WHEN ye pray, say, "Our Father," &c. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, LUKE xi. 2. JAMES iv. 3.

MANY say the LORD's prayer, who do not *pray* it, they (like Austin, before his conversion, when he prayed for chastity) are afraid, lest GOD should hear them; they do not care that GOD should say Amen, or, So be it, though they themselves will say so. They say, Our Father, but "if he be their father where is his honour?" They say, "Which art in heaven;" but did they believe it, how durst they sin as they do upon earth? They say, "Hallowed be thy name;" yet take GOD's name in vain. They say, "Thy kingdom come;" yet oppose the coming of his kingdom. They say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" yet will not stand to their words, for "this is the will of GOD, their sanctification;" but they want none of that. They say, "Give us this day our daily bread;" yet mind not the feeding of their souls with the "bread (CHRIST JESUS) which came down from heaven." They say, "Forgive us, as we forgive others;" but, alas! if GOD should take them at their word, how undone were they, whose hearts burn to malice and revenge? They say, "Lead us not into temptation;" yet run into it, and tempt Satan himself to tempt them. They say, "Deliver us from evil;" and yet deliver themselves to evil, and give up themselves "to fulfil the lust of the flesh," &c. Yea it hath been observed, that they sin most against this prayer, who stickle most for the saying of this prayer. Reader, how often hast thou been guilty of such vain petitions and repetitions? Wonder not, if thou prayest in such a manner as this, that thou art a poor receiver; imprint a sense of the divine majesty and mercy upon thy mind, that thy prayers may be fervent and earnest, and GOD will bless thee.

Assist and teach me how to pray;
Incline my nature to obey:

What thou abhorrest, that let me flee,
And only love what pleases thee.

15 JUNE.

(166)

JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, HEB. xiii. 8.
Who of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification
that, as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the LORD, 1 COR. i. 31.
31. He has finished the transgression, he has made reconciliation for iniquity,
he has brought in everlasting righteousness, DAN. ix. 24. In him have we
righteousness and strength, ISA. xlv. 24.

IN ourselves we find nothing but misery; in CHRIST all that is good,
nay, he is himself our all: he works and gives what is necessary to
salvation, therefore we cannot, and need not bring any thing to him of
our own; but since he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sancti-
fication and all; we may, and must rely only on his name, and draw
every thing from him by the continual prayer of faith. And he being
our all, the law, sin, Satan, and even our own judgments, have lost
their power and right of condemnation over us.

JEHOVAH speaks, let Israel hear;
Let all the earth rejoice and fear,
While GOD's eternal Son proclaims
His sov'reign honours and his names.
I am the last, and I the first,
The Saviour-GOD, and GOD the just;

There's none beside pretends to shew
Such justice and salvation too.

In me alone, shall men confess,
Lies all their strength and righteousness;
But such as dare despise my name,
I'll clothe them with eternal shame.

16 JUNE.

(167)

BELOVED, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, JOHN
iv. 11. I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do
good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and per-
secute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven,
MATT. v. 44.

HYPOCRITES may counterfeit the children of God in many things,
but they cannot love their enemies from their hearts; and yet by this
we must try and know ourselves, whether we are really children of
God or not. The world very easily, but falsely supposes this; but sin-
cere christians find it often very hard to believe it, without a divine
sense and assurance of it; it costs them many a sore conflict: for if Sa-
tan disputed the Sonship of CHRIST, much less will he spare any of us.
But since a true love to the children of God, and to our enemies, is a
sure evidence of our state of grace, we have our titles clear to it, though
we should walk in darkness, and be destitute of all pleasant sensations.

Now by the bowels of my God,
His sharp distress, his sore complaints;
By his last groans, his dying blood,
I charge my soul to love the saints.
Clamour, and wrath, and war, be gone;
Envy and spite for ever cease;

Let bitter words no more be known,
Amongst the saints, the sons of peace.
Tender and kind be all our thoughts;
Thro, all our lives let mercy run:
So God forgives our num'rous faults,
For the dear sake of CHRIST his Son.

17 JUNE.

(168)

AND he said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up and looked, and said there is nothing : and he said go again seven times.
1 KINGS xviii. 43.

SIX times Elijah's servant looked towards the sea, before he could see any thing, the seventh time he saw a cloud, but no bigger than a man's hand; yet that cloud within a few hours, covered the heaven with darkness, and the earth with rain. Just so may be the case with many a one when he is praying to his God, as Caleb's daughter did unto her father, JUDGES i. 15. Thou hast hitherto made me the owner of a barren heart, but give me now some springs of water, some feeling at least, some sorrow for my sins. Well, though at six times bending of thy knees, God doth not grant it, and though at the seventh time appear but one small drop swimming in thine eyes, yet be not discouraged, that drop may prove a shower, the beginning of that thaw which at last dissolve the very heart to water; or if not so, from that first drop, that spot of sorrow, there is made a reflection of true repentance: and as there is full joy for the total, the full conversion of a sinner; so there is a proportion, a measure of joy for one tear, nay, one desire of a tear, of any one sinner that repenteth.

18 JUNE.

(169)

YE shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land; but if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which you let remain of them, shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell, NUMB. xxxiv. 52, 55. See this fulfilled, JUDG. i. 27. chap. ii. 14. Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean, &c. and the Canaanites would dwell in that land; so that they (the Israelites) could not any longer stand before their enemies.

THE very same is to be observed in the holy and spiritual battles of the LORD. He that fights only against outward sins, is but very little, if at all, acquainted with the dangerous enemies in his heart, or the deep corruption of original sin, and so the tempter may easily gain an advantage over him. Experienced christians guard more against the inward assaults of wickedness; they are at peace with no sin, but keep up a constant war with all their most subtil and darling lusts, even when they appear under a spiritual disguise. O LORD, give me grace never to spare myself, or any of my sinful lusts and passions, but to destroy them without delay, as soon as they begin to move or stir, that I may not be destroyed by them.

Forgive my guilt, O Prince of peace,
I'll wound my soul no more:
Hence from my heart, ye sins, be gone;
For JESUS I adore.

Furnish me, LORD, with heav'nly arms
From grace's magazine,
And I'll proclaim eternal war
With ev'ry darling sin.

19 JUNE.

(170)

IN the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth; and the earth without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters, GEN. i. 1, 2. We are workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS, Note, unto good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them, EPH. ii. 10.

THEREFORE before we can do truly good works, we must first be created and born anew. How is it possible for a man to make any progress in renovation, if a real change has not been wrought in his heart? We must needs be first stripped of our own righteousness and strength, and made sensible of our spiritual nakedness, poverty and nothingness, by true repentance, then seek remission of sins and be justified, before we can be sanctified. CHRIST being the vine, we must first be planted in him, and draw nourishment and strength from him, by faith. When it is fulfilled, "they shall feed and lie down on his pasture, and none shall make them afraid," ZEPH. iii. 18. Then we shall be able to bring forth good fruits, and obtain victories. For it is God himself that thus makes us perfect in every good work, and prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies.

Mighty Redeemer! set me free
From my old state of sin;

O, make my soul alive to thee,
Create new powers within,

20 JUNE.

(171)

IN the LORD have I righteousness and strength, ISA. xlv. 24. 2 COR. ii. 14. chap. v. 19.

JUSTIFICATION through faith in CHRIST, at first is a very dark doctrine, hard to be understood, but afterwards we find, by experience, that it would be impossible to be saved in any other way, and that nothing can be surer than this, though all mankind should turn away from it. It will soon plainly appear, that all things, even our best performances, are unclean in the sight of God, and could not be agreeable to him in the least, without the covering of CHRIST's righteousness. Thus we are brought to submit entirely to CHRIST, and at last to look upon ourselves wholly justified through him, which alone produces rest, strength, and a gentle spirit, the true image of CHRIST.

In vain do we expect to effect this by the persuasions of our natural reason, or the strong resolutions of a generous mind. It is only to keep us off from earnestly wrestling in prayer, if by our own strength sometimes we are able to master our affections. But this is only a building of our own. The form of godliness we have, without its power: we deceive our own souls. Nothing can be pleasing in the sight of God, and profit us at the last day, but what he works himself. Away therefore with all these doings of our own. Let us acknowledge the weakness and nothingness of our strength, and apply in our poor, blind, naked, lost and miserable condition, to the righteousness of CHRIST's blood; then we shall also find power and dominion over sin, ISA. xxxiii. 24.

Sinners shall hear the sound;
Their thankful tongues shall own,

| Our righteousness and strength is found
In thee the LORD alone.

21 JUNE.

(172)

IN the day of my trouble I will call upon thee, for thou wilt hear me. **PSALM lxxxvi. 8.**—**G**OD's answer; Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am, **ISA. lviii. 9.** The LORD is rich unto all who call upon him; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved; (this, to the comfort of the weak, is several times repeated in scripture, **JOEL ii. 32. ACTS ii. 21. ROM. x. 12, 13, 19.**) Therefore when the righteous cry, the LORD heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles, **PSALM xxxiv. 18.** The LORD is nigh unto all that call upon him, **PSALM cxlv. 18.** The prayer of a righteous man availeth much, **JAMES v. 16.**

O GLORIOUS promise! how can God deny me any thing now that I pray for? He has passed his word for it; his Son has purchased it; the holy Spirit inspires the prayer; the word holds it forth, and the prayer of faith lays hold of it, and actually receives it. Prayer is the mouth of faith. If thou wilt have much, "open thy mouth wide, and it shall be filled." Who then should not be stirred up to pray much! O what foolishness is this, that we have nothing, but may obtain all from God, and yet are so loth to pray much and pray right.

God knows the pains his servants feel,
He hears his children cry;

And their best wishes to fulfil,
His grace is ever nigh,

22 JUNE.

(173)

SWEAR not at all.—MATT. v. 34.

SWEAR not by the creatures, for that in effect is swearing by their maker. Nor by him, but when called to it by authority for confirmation, and putting an end to strife ; and even that is to be done with seriousness, sincerity and circumspection ; in truth, and therefore not falsely, or deceitfully, which is calling the GOD of truth to witness a lie ; St Paul regarded it as “ the truth of God, ROM. ix. 1. and so will all good men, PSALM xxiv. 4. — In judgment, not rashly, vainly, unadvisedly, or needlessly, as Saul, 1 SAM. xiv. 39. Such oaths, promises, and vows, are better broke than kept, because they are ensnaring, and dangerous ; but best not made at all ; consideration is always necessary ;—in righteousness ; the matter lawful and possible, otherwise it will be inexpedient, sinful and ruinous. If for every idle word we must give an account in the day of judgment, then surely for every idle, trifling, common oath, such as, “ Faith and troth, God blefs me, By my soul, As I live and breathe, O CHRIST, &c.” Much more for horrible cursing and blasphemy, which profanes GOD’s name, is the language of the bottomless pit, springs from, and tends to it. In a word, perjury, which is a complicated sin ; robs the innocent of his right, perverts justice, therefore threatened, ZECH. iv. 5. GOD often takes the false swearer and imprecator of vengeance at his word, in striking him dead on the spot. LORD ! help the guilty to repent and seek pardon through the blood of CHRIST, and all to watch and pray against it.

23 JUNE.

(174)

DEARLY beloved, *avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the LORD,* Rom xii. 19.

JUDGE ye then, my brethren, would it be wise to snatch the matter out of the all-powerful hand of GOD to take it into our own, even when it is in our power to do it? We are taught by the holy prophet not to avenge ourselves, it being daring presumption to usurp GOD's province and to step into his throne. He that chastiseth the nations, shall he not correct? Might may overcome right for a time, to try GOD's children: but whether that is done with a close hand, so as not to be discovered; or with a high hand, so as not to be controuled, GOD will in his due time shew himself, and assert his prerogative against all that infringe it. It is therefore our wisdom, when we suffer wrong, to come to mind, and copy our blessed LORD's meritorious silence, committing ourselves to him that judgeth righteously.

Grace dwells with justice on the throne;
And men that love thy word,
Have in thy sanctuary known
The counsels of the LORD.

When GOD in his own sov'reign way
Comes down to save th' oppress'd,
The wrath of man shall work his prey
And he'll restrain the rest.

24 JUNE.

(175)

IF any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature, 2 COR. V. 17.

LET no man be discouraged from coming to CHRIST, because he finds not in himself that godly sorrow for sin, that ability to repent, that disposition of heart which he desires to have; we must first be in CHRIST, before we are new creatures. This is a common fault among us; we would fain have something before we come; we think God's pardons are not free, but we must bring something in our hand; whereas the proclamation runs thus, "Buy without money;" that is, come without any excellency at all; because we are commanded to "come, and take the water of life freely." Therefore do not say, I have a sinful disposition, and a hard heart, and cannot mourn for sin as I should; therefore I will stay till that be done. It is all one as if you should say, I must go to the physician, but I will have my wounds well, and my disease healed first. The end of going to CHRIST is, that this very hardness of thy heart may be taken away; that this very deadness of thy spirit may be removed; that thou mayest be enlivened, quickened, healed; that thou mayest hate sin, for he is thy physician; look not for sanctification before justification; nor for the fruits of righteousness before thou art made righteous by faith in him; thou must be first in CHRIST, before thou canst be a new creature.

25 JUNE.

(176)

ALL things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any, I COR. VI. 12.

MANY that are well affected to religion, that receive instructions of piety with pleasure and satisfaction, often wonder how it comes to pass, that they make no greater progress in that religion which they so much admire. Now the reason of it is, because religion lives only in their head, while something else has possession of their heart; and therefore they continue from year to year mere admirers and praisers of piety, without ever coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts. If it be asked why religion does not get possession of their hearts; the reason is, not because they live in gross sins or debaucheries, for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders; but because their hearts are constantly employed, perverted, and kept in a wrong state, by the indiscreet use of such things as are lawful to be used: for our souls may receive an infinite hurt merely by the abuse of innocent and lawful things. What is more innocent than rest and retirement? and yet what more dangerous than sloth and idleness? what is more lawful than eating and drinking? and yet what more destructive of virtue than sensuality and indulgence? How lawful and praiseworthy is the care of a family? and yet what so prejudicial as a worldly and solicitous temper? Reader, follow the apostle, and beware of lawful things; keep thy heart free from the power of them.

26 JUNE.

(177)

AND the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity, ISA. xxxiii. 24. See also PSALM cxxx 4. EZEK. xvi. 63. LUKE vii. 1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.

IN these passages we see that a right belief of the remission of sins, or of justification, constrains us most of all things to fear and love God, which cannot fail of producing true holiness. This faith of a believer hanging upon grace, and fixing its eye on CHRIST alone, as conscious there is nothing good in him, but much evil, humbling him, both keeps him in rest and joy, and makes him willing and able to run the christian race; whereas a reliance on works and experiences, puffs up, and produces nothing but unbelief, uneasiness, uncertainty and weakness: good works and gracious experiences are very comfortable and encouraging, but are not to be depended upon.

There is a voice of sov'reign grace
Sounds from the sacred word;

O! ye despairing sinners, come
And trust upon the LORD.

My soul obeys th' almighty call,
And runs to this relief;

I would believe thy promise, LORD;

O! help my unbelief,

Stretch out thine arm, victorious King,
My reigning sins subdue;
Drive the old dragon from his seat,
And form my soul anew.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall:
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all,

27 JUNE.

(178)

EVERY good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, JAMES i. 17.

READER, it is a point of the greatest importance for thee to know that every evil thing is of thyself, and every good thing of GOD; without faith we cannot be saved; but, saith St Paul, EPH. ii. 8. "by the grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD." We are called upon to repent; but in ACTS v. 31. we read that "CHRIST is exalted at the Father's right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel."—We must be born again, but regeneration is wholly of GOD's will; "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD," JOHN i. 13.—Saving knowledge is likewise the gift of GOD; "to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," MATT. iv. 11. Effectual calling is also of GOD's grace, 2TIM. i. 9. Justification is of GOD's grace, we are justified freely. Adoption also is an act of grace, he vouchsafes that high privilege, not in common to all, but only to so many as he pleaseth. Perseverance in duty is also GOD's gift, for "we are preserved by the power of GOD to salvation." Eternal life is also a gift, for "the gift of GOD is eternal life through JESUS CHRIST." The knowledge of these things, reader, will keep thee humble and dependent, and dispose thee to give to GOD the glory of his grace.

28 JUNE.

(179)

WE would see JESUS. Search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me, JOHN xii. 21. and ch. v. 30.

It is remarkable, that the wise men travelling to find CHRIST, followed only the star; and as long as they had that in their view they were assured that they were in the right way, and we may believe had great pleasure in their journey; but when they entered into Jerusalem (whereas the star led them not thither, but into Bethlehem) and there would be instructed where CHRIST was born, they were not only ignorant of the place where, but they had also lost the sight of the star that should guide them thither. Whereby we are taught this useful lesson, that when we are going to learn CHRIST, to seek CHRIST, who is above, to beware we lose not the star of God's word, which only is the mark that shews us where CHRIST is, and which way we may come to him: Whereunto may be added, that if with David we make the word of God "a lanthorn to our feet, and a light to our paths," we should not be led aside by every false fire that presents itself to us, but by keeping close to the word of God, we shall be brought to the knowledge of CHRIST here, and to the full enjoyment of him hereafter. Reader, this little book is only designed to lead thee to "search the scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation thro' faith in JESUS CHRIST."

Eternal life God's word imparts,
Whereon each fainting spirit lives,

| Here sweeter comforts cheer our hearts
Than all the round of nature gives.

29 JUNE.

(180)

LET no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers: and grieve not the holy Spirit of God. Let not filthiness be once named among you, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, EPH. iv. 29. chap. v. 4.

Idle words are hurtful words; they grieve the holy Spirit, destroy what power has been obtained by prayer, and cause nothing but levity and distraction of mind. Let this be a caution against talking too much; for if it does not tend to the glory of God, it is nothing but corrupt communication. May all christians take heed to refrain their tongues, and never speak unadvisedly, but always consider first whether their words can be profitable to others, and acceptable to God in heaven. O LORD, teach me by thy wisdom to put a lock to my mouth, and to weigh every word like gold. Let my heart and lips be moved and governed by thy holy Spirit, that both my silence and talking may be according to thy will and direction. Grant that I may always chiefly converse with thee in prayer and thanksgiving, for the good of my own soul and others. And whenever I am to open my lips in due time, let my words be so seasoned and blessed as to administer grace to the hearers.

So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;

| So let our words and virtues shine
To prove the doctrine all divine.

30 JUNE.

(181)

AND he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it, GEN. xxviii. 12.

THIS ladder is an emblem of the divine providence, which governs all things. Its being set upon the earth, denotes the steadiness of providence, which nothing is able to unsettle ; its reaching up to heaven, signifies its universality, or that it extends to all things : the several steps of the ladder are the motions and actions of providence ; the angels going up and down, shew, that they are the great ministers of providence, never idle, but always employed in the preservation of the just ; their ascending, means their going up to receive the divine orders and commands ; and their descending, their coming down upon earth to put them in execution. So that in this representation, God signified to Jacob, now full of care and uneasy apprehensions, that the man who was under the custody and protection of divine providence, wanted not company in a wilderness ; wanted not security in the midst of dangers ; wanted not direction in the most difficult undertakings ; since there were so many ministering spirits holding correspondence between earth and heaven, and daily and hourly “ sent forth from God’s presence to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation.”

I JULY.

(182)

— *ALLELUIA*; for the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth, REV. xix. 6.

GOD is the LORD of hosts, he is the great commander of heaven and earth; he it is that directs the conflicts, neither are any put to try mastery, no field pitched, no battle fought, but by his special order and commission, and all for the accomplishment of his glory. But it befalleth us, as it doth with them which stand in the same level wherein two great armies are ready to engage, they conceive them to be a disordered multitude; whom, notwithstanding, if they beheld from a high hill, they would discern that they were artificially ranged, and every one serving under his own colours. Even so men, who behold the state of the world, with the eyes of flesh and blood, dim by reason of the corruption of their judgments, and weakness of their affections, think all things are out of order, they "see servants riding on horses. and princes going on foot;" that the worse men are, the better they fare; and they fare the worse, the better they are; but if they would go into God's sanctuary, and judge of occurrences by heavenly principles, then they would confess, that no army on earth can be better marshalled, than the great army of all the creatures of heaven and earth, yea, and of hell too; and that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, all is well, and will end well, especially to God's people; and that the God of order, will bring light out of darkness, and order out of the greatest confusion, could they but have patience, and let him alone with his own work.

2 JULY.

(183)

THOU hast thrust fore at me, that I might fall; but the LORD helped me.
Preserved in JESUS CHRIST, and called, PSALM cxviii. 13. JUDE 1.

JESUS was in the council, undertook our cause, struck hands in the covenant as our surety; wrought out a righteousness for us, suffered our curse on the tree to redeem us, ever lives, and ever loves, and ever pleads our cause, while he represents our persons before the everlastingly gracious, and infinitely just and righteous JEHOVAH, his Father and our Father, now well pleased with us, because accepted and preserved in the beloved. Are these things so? And has the LORD, the Spirit, the glorifier of JESUS, enlightened our understandings to see these things, enabled us to believe, and assured our hearts of our own happy share and interest in them? O my soul, stop, reflect, dwell on such wonderful power, marvellous favour, distinguishing love, and appropriated mercy! Now let all mine enemies exert their utmost power, I will not be afraid. Afflictions, pains, temptations may await me, waves and storms may go over my head, Satan may sift me as wheat, the waters of death may prove bitter to my taste, yet will I not be discouraged; he that died for me, will take care of me, he that pardoned my aggravated offences, will heal my infirmities, he that knew the power of temptation will support, and deliver me out of all. This I believe, LORD, help my unbelief!

The wisdom, the power, the love, the promise, the covenant, and the oath of JEHOVAH, stand all engaged for the preservation of a poor, dependent believer in JESUS.
Allouia.

3 JULY.

(184)

LEARN of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls, MATT. xi. 29. Be clothed with humility, for GOD resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of GOD, that he may exalt you in due time, 1 PET. v. 5, 6.

SUCH as are haughty and self-conceited, rush against the mighty hand of GOD, and destroy themselves: but those that bow and humble under it, will be protected by the same. Whatever skill of learning and demonstration we may acquire in the schools of human sciences, if we do not learn to be lowly in heart, and dead to the world, the scripture does not allow us to be truly wise and enlightened, but calls us "poor, blind, miserable, worldly students of glory," PROV. xi. 2. 1 COR. i. 18 and ii. 14 chapters. Therefore, "The more a man dies to this world, the more is he enlightened."

LORD, if thou the grace impart,
Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
I shall as my Master be,
Rooted in humility.

Simple, teachable, and mild,
Chang'd into a little child;

Pleas'd with all the LORD provides,
Wean'd from all the world besides.

Father, fix my soul on thee,
Ev'ry evil let me flee;
Nothing want beneath, above;
Happy in thy precious love.

4 JULY.

(185)

*AND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him, GEN.
xxxii. 1.*

As Jacob was favoured with a heavenly vision, when he first departed from his father's house; so the divine Being thought proper again to favour him with the same token of his protection at his return thither, thereby to encourage him to meet with confidence those dangers he had to encounter. — Hence we may observe, that when God designs his people for extraordinary trials, he prepares them by extraordinary comforts. We should think it had been more seasonable for these angels to have appeared to him just in the heat of his engagement, either with Laban before, or Esau after, than in this calm and quiet interval, when he saw not himself in any imminent peril. But God will have us, when we are in peace, to provide for trouble; and when trouble comes, to live upon former observations and experiences; or however, to draw comfort and encouragement from them; knowing assuredly, that he who has delivered in six troubles, will also deliver in seven; and in due time out of all. — This may be an emblem of God's people at death, who are then returning to Canaan, to their heavenly father's house; and then the angels of God will meet them, to congratulate the happy finishing of their servitude, and carry them to their everlasting rest.

5 JULY.

(186)

FOR by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned, MATT. xii. 37.

THE general bent and turn of a man's discourse, is a sure index to the disposition of his mind; for "out of the abundance of the heart" "the mouth speaketh." Other outward marks may be imitated; but to offend not in tongue; to be free from detraction and boasting, to speak the truth in love, to "let no corrupt communication" (nothing contrary to peace or holiness) "proceed out of the mouth;" this is the finger of God. Here the Hypocrite and Formalist always fail. Let us earnestly pray for grace to bridle the tongue. "O LORD, set a" "watch upon my mouth, keep the doors of my lips;" that I may never bring a reproach upon my profession, by speaking proud, false, foolish or censorious words.

The tongue, that most unruly pow'r,
Requires a strong restraint:
We must be watchful ev'ry hour,
And pray, but never faint.

LORD! can a feeble helpless worm
Perform a task so hard!
Thy grace must all the work perform,
And give the free reward.

6 JULY.

(187)

LOOSE them and bring them unto me; and if any say aught unto you, ye shall say, The LORD hath need of them, and straightway he will send them, MATT. xxi. 2, 3. The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands, JUDGES xv. 14.

THUS the Spirit of the LORD makes us free from all spiritual bonds; for "where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is liberty," 2 COR. iii. 17. Though I was torn from CHRIST by the enemy; yet as a robber he gets no right to me. CHRIST does not give up for this reason his right, which he has to me on so many accounts; and as soon as I am willing by his grace to give up myself to him, and desire to be delivered from the power of Satan, he vindicates and saves me, as his property; I am his, Satan looses his hold, and nothing in the world can withhold me from him, All the fetters must fall off.

What tho' the hosts of death and hell
All arm'd against me stood,
Terrors no more shall shake my soul;
My refuge is my GOD.

Arise, O LORD, fulfil thy grace,
While I thy glory sing:

My God has broke the serpent's teeth,
And death has lost his sting.

Salvation to the LORD belongs,
His arm alone can save:
Blessings attend thy people here,
And reach beyond the grave.

7 JULY.

(188)

MAKE you a new heart and a new spirit, *EZEK. xviii. 31.* See also
2 COR. V. 17, 18—21.

MANY are converted, but not entirely to CHRIST, and from their own righteousness, so as to be truly sensible of their wickedness and abomination, and earnestly to flee to CHRIST for reconciliation and righteousness; and therefore never get their hearts changed, but continue on in their mere outward moral state year after year. O LORD, let me daily receive a word from thee, to nourish and strengthen my soul, so as to be renewed daily by it more and more.

O for an heart to love my GOD!
An heart from sin set free;
An heart that always feels the blood,
So freely shed for me!

An heart resign'd, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne;
Where only CHRIST is heard to speak,
Where JESUS reigns alone.

An humble, lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true and clean;
Which neither life, nor death can part
From him that dwells within.

An heart in ev'ry thought renew'd,
And fill'd with love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, LORD, of thine.

8 JULY.

(189)

MARTHA, *Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things,*
LUKE X. 41. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the*
issues of life, PROV. iv. 23.

As the virtue of a strong spirituous liquor evaporates by degrees in a vial which is not closely stopped, in like manner the life and power of the Spirit insensibly vanishes away, if the heart is not kept with all diligence. Of the former remains only water; of the latter, nothing but the form of religion; or perhaps some false principles and errors crept in. Therefore many must be tried and sifted, that they may know, like Hezekiah, what is in their hearts, 2 CHRON. xxxii. 31. consequently, what more needful, than to take heed to our own spirit, and to keep close to the written word; for as the latter times draw nearer, the more plausible will errors and seducements appear both on your right hand and on your left; beware of being drawn off from the truth, either by false worldly prudence, or the pretended spiritual form of fanatics?

O LORD, permit me not to be
A stranger to myself and thee;
Amidst a thousand thoughts I rove,
Forgetful of my highest love.
Call me away from flesh and sense,
One sov'reign word can draw me thence;

I would obey the voice divine,
And all inferior things resign.
Be earth with all her scenes withdrawn;
Let noise and vanity be gone:
In secret silence of the mind,
My heav'n, and there my God I find.

9 JULY.

(190)

MY soul thirsteth after thee as a barren land, PSALM cxliiii. 6. Let
that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life
REV. xxii. 17. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He
believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of
water, JOHN vii. 37, 38.

WHEN thou art so dry and barren, examine thyself closely what
may be the cause; ask pardon for all offences, and take care to mend
them. And though thou shouldest not find any thing particular, yet
humble thyself deeply before the LORD; but at the same time remem-
ber that thou art accepted, beloved, justified and blessed in CHRIST; and
in this disposition quietly wait the returns of some new drops of living
water and grace; but be also sure afterwards to cherish and make
right use of them. Thus thou shalt be like a watered garden, Isa-
lviii. 11.

For thee I thirst, O LORD, I mourn;
When will thy smiling face return?

Shall all my joys on earth remove?
And God for ever hide his love?

A N S W E R.

Ho! ye that pant for living streams,
And pine away and die;
Here you may quench your raging thirst
With springs that never dry.

Rivers of love and mercy here
In a rich ocean join;
Salvation in abundance flows,
Like floods of milk and wine.

10 JULY.

(191)

MY soul waiteth upon GOD: from him comes my salvation; he is only my defence, I shall not be greatly moved. Therefore, trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him. GOD is a refuge for us, PSALM lxii. 2, 3, 9.

THE more quiet, patient, believing, faithful, ardent and single we are, the sooner we shall see the salvation and victory of the LORD. Double-minded souls have the greatest struggle, and the slothful must tarry the longer. Sometimes, it is true, though we are faithful, yet we must cry out, "O LORD, how long?" PSALM vi. 4. But nevertheless he always hears and delivers us, though we do not see and feel it directly, but seem to suffer continually. In heaven we shall certainly see it, and reap the blessed fruits of all our afflictions and prayers.

My spirit looks to God alone;
My rock and refuge is his throne;
In all my fears, in all my straits,
My soul on his salvation waits.
Trust him, ye saints, in all your ways;
Pour out your hearts before his face:

When helpers fail, and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.
For sov'reign pow'r reigns not alone,
Grace is a partner of the throne:
Thy grace and justice, mighty LORD,
Shall well divide our last reward.

11 JULY.

(192)

*I Have been young, and now am old: yet I have not seen the righteous forsake
nor his seed begging their bread, PSALM xxxvii. 25.*

SWEET declaration! encouraging experience! The LORD indeed careth for the righteous; for those, who, having seen the want of mercy, rely for it upon the promise of God that there is forgiveness with him, for the obedience unto death of JESUS CHRIST. He hath promised, that he will never leave, nor forsake them—that he will withhold from them no manner of thing that is good. He careth also for their seed; so that they do not beg their bread. He frequently provides for them, when their parents are no more, in such unexpected ways, that many who see it are constrained to acknowledge, “this is the LORD’s doing.” And sometimes, while they are living, he brings bread to their mouths, and also furnishes them with opportunities to hear of, and seek for the bread which came down from heaven, and which endureth unto everlasting life; thus snatching them, as it were, from the jaws of ignorance and destruction. O LORD, if mine ears have heard—if mine eyes have seen—and more especially if I partake of such blessings may I gratefully own, that thou art a God keeping covenant and mercy; and may this proof of thy faithfulness, a ground of reliance upon thee for all needful promised blessings! help me to do my part—to cast all my care on thee—and endeavour by prayer, instruction and example, that thy goodness may be sanctified to my seed, that we may be together here and hereafter, to the praise of the glory of thy grace.

12 JULY.

(193)

Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, COL. i. 11.

O MY soul, what encouraging words are these ! How full of meaning ! The LORD our righteousness, is the LORD our strength. He is near at hand, believer, to STRENGTHEN thee, according to thy need. Not in one or two respects, but with all might, with a supply suited to every various occasion, and that to the utmost, answerable to what may be expected from the exertion of " his own glorious power." Happy state of the believer in JESUS ; though feeble in himself, surrounded with enemies, and exercised with a continual warfare, he shall not be overpowered ; for the promise and the arm of GOD is on his side. He is in alliance offensive and defensive with Him who can do what he pleases ; and he shall therefore be " made more than " conqueror through him who has loved him."

Let me but hear my Saviour say,
"Strength shall be equal to thy day ;"
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace,

I glory in infirmity,
THAT CHRIST'S own pow'r may rest on me:
When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield and CHRIST my song.

O

13 JULY.

(194)

M*Y beloved is mine, and I am his, CANT. ii. 16.—Divine answer; I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the LORD, Hos. ii. 19, 20.*

By faith in the blood of CHRIST we are accepted, and closely united to him as our bridegroom. By that we daily eat his flesh, drink his blood, and are sprinkled all over; since even the best of our works, our prayers and other performances, still want it continually; as appears from the type, HEB. ix. 19—21. where it is said, that “All the vessels of the ministry, and even the book was sprinkled.”

Hark! the Redeemer from on high,
Sweetly invites his fav'rites nigh;
From caves of darkness and of doubt
He gently speaks, and calls us out.

“ My sister and my spouse, he cries,
Bound to my heart by various ties;
Thy pow'rful love my heart detains
In strong delight and pleasing chains.”

Dear LORD, our thankful heart receives
The hope thy invitation gives:
To thee our joyful lips shall raise
The voice of prayer and of praise.

I am my love's, and he is mine;
Our hearts, our hopes, our passions join;
Nor let a motion, nor a word,
Nor thought arise to grieve my LORD,

14 JULY.

(195)

WHEN thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek, PSALM xxviii. 8. I am thine, save me: for I have sought thy precepts, PSALM cxix. 94.—Divine answer; They who seek me early shall find me, PROV. vii. 17. The humble shall see this and be glad, and your hearts shall live that seek GOD, PSALM lxix. 32. Seek and you shall find, MATT. vii. 8. And whoever finds me, finds life, PROV. viii. 35. For I am the life, JOHN xiv. 6.

SUCH arguments and intreaties we may use with GOD, to strengthen us in faith: he does not want them, but we do; and he is well pleased, when we take him at his word. For if we would not draw near to GOD in prayer till our hearts were quickened, perhaps we might never come to it. Therefore we must not indulge ourselves in such a state of dulness, but rather put a force upon ourselves, and pray against our natural inclination. Being faithful and instant in this, we shall certainly have our affections warmed, and great power and blessings given from above, that our hearts may live. O LORD, I plead thy precious promises and all thy former deliverances. Thou canst not deny thy word; I am a child of thy covenant, and thou hast laid thyself under an obligation to help me out, nay to abide, to live and reign in me; let no sin henceforth have dominion over me.

LORD, I address thy heav'nly throne;
Call me a child of thine:
Send down the Spirit of thy Son
To form my heart divine.

There shed thy choicest love abroad,
And make my comforts strong;
Then shall I say; My Father GOD,
With an unwav'ring tongue.

15 JULY.

(196)

O My GOD, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed, PSALM XXV. 2. In thee,
O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O LORD my GOD, PSALM XXXVIII.
15. Let none that wait on thee be ashamed, PSALM XXV. 3 — Divine answer;
Hope makes not ashamed, ROM. v. 5. They that trust in the LORD shall be as
mount Zion, which abideth for ever, PSALM CXXV. 1. Pray for help, and
though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry, HAB.
ii. 3. Then thou shalt know, &c. ISAI. xlix. 33.

DOES GOD delay his promises, and the enemy raise a suspicion against
his faithfulness? remember that it is said, WAIT. Thou art still in
being, and shalt be a witness to God's faithfulness. If he was not
faithful and true, he could not be GOD. His faithfulness is eternal,
and as sure and great as himself; above all our thoughts. Thou shalt
at last the more gloriously experience it, and not be ashamed: sooner
shall heaven and earth pass away. "He keeps truth for ever,"
PSALM cxlvi. 6.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God: He made the sky,
And earth and seas, with all their train;
And none shall find his promise vain:

His truth for ever stands secure:
He saves th' oppress'd, he feeds the poor;
He sends the lab'ring conscience peace,
And grants the pris'ner sweet release.

16 JULY.

(197)

AND I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,
JOHN xii. 32.

THIS he spoke of his death. It is the remembrance of his cruel shameful death, what he suffered, said and finished, when he hung naked and wounded upon the cross, that effectually captivates the sinner's heart to himself. The sharpest convictions, if not relieved by this sight, will never teach the heart to love. The strongest resolutions, unless made with this bleeding object in view, will melt away like snow. But a crucified Saviour is a powerful magnet indeed; multitudes have been drawn by it, from sin to holiness, from Satan to God, from earth to heaven.

Was it for crimes that I have done,
He gron'd upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, LORD, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.

17 JULY.

(198)

LOVE seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and never faileth, 1 Cor.
xiii. 5, 8.

It being my heart's desire, O my dear heavenly Father, once to love thee and my neighbour uprightly and ardently, I beg that thou wouldst let me know and enjoy thy love in CHRIST, which is the only means to come to the same: for how can I possibly be cold and hard, when resting at the cross of CHRIST, and in thy bosom, I enjoy thy free grace, and truly experience thine infinite love towards me, the most miserable and chiefest of sinners? O may this melt down, and change me thoroughly!

Had I the tongues of Greeks and Jews,
And nobler speech than angels use,
If LOVE be absent, I am found
Like tinkling brass, an empty sound.

Were I inspir'd to preach, and tell
All that is done in heav'n and hell,
Or cou'd my faith the world remove,
Still I am wanting without LOVE.

Shou'd I distribute all my store
To feed the bowels of the poor,
Or give my body to the flame
To gain a martyr's glorious name;

If LOVE to GOD and LOVE to men
Be absent, all my hopes are vain:
Nor tongues, nor gifts, nor fiery zeal,
The work of LOVE can e'er fulfil.

18 JULY.

(199)

UNTO thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, PSALM XXV. 1.—Divine answer; Thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear, PSALM X. 7.

FAITH only desires CHRIST, and does neither delight in the gain, nor grieve much at the loss of temporal things; but, “Faith, through an earnest desire for CHRIST and his word, rises above all creatures, and overcomes all worldly pleasures and fears.” And this being the work of GOD, will certainly be accomplished; nay, is looked upon as really accomplished already in our desires and endeavours after it; in the same manner as evil desires are reckoned for deeds in the sight of GOD, though they never proceed to overt-acts.

I cannot bear this absence, LORD;
My life expires if thou depart;
Be thou, my heart, still near my GOD,
And thou, my GOD, be near my heart.

I was not born for earth and sin,
Nor can I live on things so vile;

Yet I will stay my father's time,
And hope and wait for heav'n a while.

Then, dearest LORD, in thine embrace
Let me resign my fleeting breath,
And with a smile upon my face,
Pass the important hour of death.

19 JULY.

(200)

DRAW near in the day that I will call upon thee : say unto me, Fear not :
O LORD, plead thou the cause of my soul, and redeem my life, LAM. iii.
57, 58.—GOD's answer ; Fear not, for I am with thee, ISAI. xliii. 5. I
am he that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have
the keys of hell and death, REV. i. 18.

“ CHRIST has overcome death, led captivity captive, and by one
“ offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” HEB. x. 14.
Whoever leaves this world, believing in him, being perfected already,
has nothing to fear after death. O ! my heavenly Father, grant that
the imperfect work of sanctification may humble me much, but cause
no fear of death, nor disturb my filial confidence ; since this does not
depend on any particular degree of holiness, but only on my being in
CHRIST, and being adopted through him ; which the weakest child,
as well as the strongest, may boldly believe ; having both like right,
like grace, and like pardon. Being therefore a child, I am an heir,
and shall find life and deliverance in death.

I am Alpha, says the Saviour,
I Omega likewise am ;
I was dead, and live for ever,
GOD Almighty and the Lamb.

In the LORD is our perfection,
And in him our boast we'll make ;
We shall share his resurrection,
If we of his death partake.

20 JULY.

(201)

AND he gave him a sign, but Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up, 2 CHRON. xxxii.

24, 25.

AHAZ trusting in the Assyrians for help, had refused a sign graciously offered by GOD as a token of deliverance. He did not choose to put his whole trust in GOD, though his pretence was, he would not tempt the LORD. This might lead his son Hezekiah to ask for a sign, and it proved a snare to him. The king of Babylon, on finding Hezekiah so highly honoured by the sun, thought it incumbent upon him to send ambassadors with letters and a present to such a favourite of the god of the Babylonians.

Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and sought craftily to avail himself of this false notion of the king of Babylon; and, by not affronting their god, he hoped to gain a safe protection against the king of Assyria.—Isaiah was ordered to acquaint him, that as he preferred an arm of flesh to his almighty Deliverer, he should experience the sad effect of his folly in not honouring GOD; and all that he had so vainly shewed should be carried to Babylon.—Hezekiah ought to have testified to the ambassadors, that the LORD GOD of Israel stopped the sun in its progress. He had here a fair opportunity of shewing them and their king the vanity of their idolatry in worshipping the sun, evidently under the direction of a superior being.—He ought also to have given GOD all the glory in this matter, and have rested on him, and him alone, for safety, who had just then given him such a striking proof of his power and favour.—Worldly wisdom is arrant folly, and when set in opposition to the will of GOD, will be sure to disappoint us. Even the noblest instance of wisdom and love GOD ever shewed in the salvation of sinners by JESUS CHRIST, if not accepted of in GOD's own way, with humility and simplicity, will not have its desired effect.—Worldly wisdom ensnared Hezekiah, carnal wisdom and pride of heart ruin many a one, who otherwise probably might rejoice in the salvation of JESUS.

21 JULY.

(202)

CAN two walk together, except they be agreed, AMOS iii. 3.

READER, I suppose thee a religious person, one that has been converted by the power of grace; one that is desirous to glorify God in his and conversation; one that has an interest in JESUS, and wants to have it made more manifest to thine own self every day; one that considers this life as a passage to a better; and would be glad of a spiritual companion to go along with thee, for "two are better than one." Give me the right hand of fellowship to any before thou hast tried him, for two cannot walk comfortably together except they are agreed: bring him to the law of God, the eternal, moral law of God, contained in the Ten Commandments; and ask him, Does he look upon that law of God as the rule of his life? If he denies it, avoid him. If he only says, it is a rule, and for the matter of it a good one, avoid him. If he says it is a good rule to him, but a passive one, that says nothing to him; still avoid him. If he says he is not under the commanding power of it, turn away from him. But if he says, that he sincerely takes it as God's revealed will to him, owns the authority thereof over his conscience and conversation, "*Thus saith the LORD;*" breathing after universal obedience thereto, repenting and mourning where he falls short thereof, and fleeing by faith to CHRIST for all peace and pardon; take such one for a friend and companion.

22 JULY.

(203)

MY soul fainteth for thy salvation. My soul is continually in my hand. Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live, and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name, PSALM CXIX. 81, 109, 116, 132.

O LORD, I love thy name also, since thou art called merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and even, the LORD our righteousness: and therefore I depend upon nothing of my own, but throw myself entirely upon thy free grace and righteousness, which keeps me alone in peace. Without thee I am ignorant and weak; and Satan being as wicked as he is cunning, what would become of me, if I was not kept and preserved by thee? "Thy name is a strong tower, the righteous enter there and are safe;" there let me abide also continually, so shall I be safe from every adversary.

The arms of everlasting love
Beneath my soul he plac'd;
And on the rock of ages set
My slipp'ry footsteps fast.
The city of my blest abode
Is wall'd around with grace;

Salvation for a bulwark stands,
To shield the sacred place.
Satan may vent his sharpest spite,
And all his legions rore;
Almighty mercy guards my life,
And bounds his raging pow'r.

23 JULY.

(204)

NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory,
PSALM CXV. 1.

How little reason have we to glory in any thing of our own, since nothing but sin is ours, which even defiles that which is of God. O LORD, grant that I may always give thee thy own; that I may know of no delight, and glory but in thee, and have no other design and request, but to live in godly simplicity, innocence and quietness, for "he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely," PROV. X. 9. and the best method to have much confidence, is to have a single eye, which does not seek its own. For whence is all disquietude of mind, but from our own lusts and unmortified affections, which are like the troubled sea? and what affords more peace than to have nothing at heart but the glory of God, and to count ourselves worthy of no good. Thus we shall be enabled to call our misfortunes a happiness, and be satisfied and praise the LORD as much when he hath taken something from us, as if he had granted a blessing; being sure that it tends to our good and to his glory, which he knows best how to promote, and that nothing but sin can make us unhappy and miserable.

Great God! how infinite art thou!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to thee.

Our lives thro' various scenes are drawn,
And vex'd with trifling cares;
While thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturb'd affairs.

24 JULY.

(205)

WHO shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died, yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of GOD, who also maketh intercession for us, ROM. viii. 33. 34.

THERE is a story, how the devil appeared to a dying man, and shewed him a parchment roll, which was very long, wherein was written on every side the sins of the poor sick man, which were many in number: and there were also written the idle words he had spoken, which made up a great part of the words that he had ever spoken in his life; together with the false words, the unchaste words, and angry words; afterwards came in rank his vain and ungodly words; and lastly, his actions, digested according to the commandments: Whereupon Satan said, See here, behold thy virtues; see here what thy examination must be.—Whereupon the poor sinner answered, It is true, Satan, but thou hast not set down all, for thou shouldest have added, and set down here below, “The blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanses us from all our sins;” and this also should not have been forgotten, that “Whosoever believeth in HIM, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” Whereupon the devil vanished.—Thus if the devil should muster up our sins, and set them in order before us, let but CHRIST be named in a faithful way, and he will give back, and fly away with all speed.

25 JULY.

(206)

BUT we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, 2 COR. iii. 18. Therefore, let this mind be in you which was in CHRIST JESUS, PHIL. ii. 5. For he has left us an example that we should follow his steps, 1 PET. ii. 21.

IF, before we say or do any thing, we would but always consider whether it was agreeable to the pattern of CHRIST, a multitude of sins would not be committed. O LORD, however miserable I am, when I humble myself before thee with a filial confidence, looking upon myself as united to thee, and, as the vilest of sinners, depending only upon thy free grace, I enjoy peace. Grant therefore, O my GOD, that this beholding of thee may be my constant exercise, and that by this means I may be strengthened chearfully to follow thy pattern daily, to be changed more and more into the glorious image of thy love, patience and humility, and thus to be truly prepared for eternal life.

My dear Redeemer and my LORD !
I read my duty in thy word ;
But in thy life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.
Such was thy truth and such thy zeal,
Such deference to thy Father's will,

Such love, and meekness so divine,
I would transcribe and make them mine.
Be thou my pattern, make me bear
More of thy gracious image here ;
Then GOD the judge shall own my name
Among the followers of the Lamb.

26 JULY.

(207)

HE maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, MATT. V. 45.

MANY serious people are very ready to give alms to the pious part of their poor brethren, but are afraid of relieving a common beggar ; and it must be owned, that, as riches are a talent from God, they who have them must be discreet in the distribution of them ; the religious poor have the best claim, but others ought not to be entirely overlooked ; as is plain from the conduct of God himself, for " He maketh his sun," &c. It may be said, they will make an ill use of your bounty ; but what then ? is not this the very method of divine goodness ? Is not this the very goodness that is recommended to us in scripture, by the imitating of which, we may be " the children of our Father which is in heaven, " who sendeth rain on the just and unjust ?" Shall I withhold a little money or food from my fellow creature, for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me ? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to his own great goodness : and shall I be so absurd, as to withhold my charity from a poor fellow-creature, because he may perhaps not deserve it ? Shall I use a measure towards him, which I pray God never to use towards me ? Lazarus was a common beggar, and yet he was the care of angels, and carried into Abraham's bosom. " I was a-STRANGER, and ye took me in," saith our blessed Saviour ; but who can perform this duty, that will not relieve persons that are unknown to them ? " As we have therefore opportunity, let us do " good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

27 JULY.

(208)

THOUGH *I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me,* PSALM XXXIII. 4. See also EXOD. xiv. of the deliverance of the Israelites, and the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red sea.

To rejoice in the light is certainly most agreeable, but not always so profitable to every one, as sometimes to walk in the dark, nay, in the valley of the shadow of death. In this condition some are more humble and cautious than the former, and the preciousness of the glimpses of grace is more valued. O LORD, I will now willingly rely upon thy bare word, even when deprived of sensible comforts; grant only that in death I may be refreshed by the light of thy countenance. Amen. Yes, thou hast promised "that the righteous shall have hope " in his death," PROV. xiv. 32.

Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there;
We may walk thro' our darkest shade,
And never yield to fear.
May I but climb to Pisgah's top,
And view the promis'd land,

My flesh itself shall long to drop,
And pray for the command.
Clasp'd in my heav'nly Father's arms,
I shall forget my breath,
And lose my life among the charms
Of so divine a death.

28 JULY.

(209)

HEAR, ye children, the instruction of a father; and attend to know understanding. We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, PROV. iv. 1. JOHN iii. 11. 1 JOHN iv. 1.

READER, whoever thou art, that comest to this book for instruction and edification, let the following monitions, the result of long experience and observation, be acceptable unto thee; they are designed for thy spiritual good, will warn thee against errors, and if complied with, give thee a true relish of gospel peace, and redeeming love. Let "the life thou now livest in the flesh be by faith in the Son of God." Labour after a constant soul-reviving fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the holy Spirit. Watch over thy passions, conduct, and conversation, so as that the Spirit of the Lord be not grieved, nor his comfortable influences withdrawn from thy soul. Be ready to every good work as thou hast ability and opportunity; and take special care that thy good be not evil spoken of through the manner of thy performing it. Let no external services whatever, either respecting thyself or others, supersede a constant watchfulness over the inward motions of thine own heart. Let the written word of God be thine invariable rule both in principle and practice. Feelings, impulses, and fancies are apt to misguide, and give a poor worm a lofty idea of his own consequence. Whatever persuasion advanceth not the Redeemer's honour, and tendeth not to magnify his grace, work, and salvation, be sure cometh not of him that calleth us. Be very earnest after meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, inward holiness, and all other graces of the Spirit; these carry their own evidence that they are wrought of God; and in their blessed effects will remain with thee for evermore.

"My son, if thine heart be wise and experienced in these things, my heart shall rejoice, even mine."

29 JULY.

(210)

OPEN thou mine eyes, that I may see wonderful things out of thy law.
PSALM CXIX. 18. *Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.*
PSALM XIII. 3. *For with thee is the fountain of life, in thy light shall we see light,* PSALM XXXVI. 9.—Divine answer; *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes in me should not abide in darkness,* JOHN XII. 46. *The LORD opens the eyes of the blind,* PSALM CXLVI. 8.

MANY imagine, that their eyes are opened, and that they have clear notions of religion in their heads; but they see just like Eve after eating the forbidden fruit; their hearts being corrupted and destitute of simplicity, a most essential part of a christian. For he that does not understand the word of God by the light of the holy Spirit, through prayer and faith, but only by his natural reason, is certainly blind still, REV. III. 17. and one devilish and plausible temptation to error and sin, is enough to break the strongest chain of demonstration, for it is only "faith that gets the victory," 1 JOHN V. 4.

The souls enlight'ned from above
With joy receive the word;
They see what wisdom, pow'r and love
Shines in their dying LORD.
The vital favour of his name
Restores their fainting breath;

But unbelief perverts the same
To guilt, despair and death.
Till God diffuse his graces down,
Like show'rs of heav'nly rain,
In vain Apollon sows the ground,
And Paul may plant in vain,

30 JULY.

(211)

WITHOUT me ye can do nothing; therefore, abide in me, JOHN
XV. 4, 5.

I CAN no more do without thee, O my dear Saviour, than the branch can without the vine! Keep me therefore always in thee, else I shall have recourse to my own fancied stock of grace, though I have been a thousand times convinced of my insufficiency. May I never be left in the least thing to my own strength, but be directed, assisted and blessed by thee in all my doings. For as far as I trust to myself, I am distrustful of thee, and consequently weak; and, on the other hand, the more I distrust myself, the more I trust to thee, and shall be strengthened and blessed.

Son of God, thy blessing grant;
Still supply my ev'ry want;
Tree of life, thine infl'ence shed,
With thy sap my spirit feed.
Tend'rest branch, alas! am I;
Wither without thee, and die;
Weak as helpless infancy;
O confirm my soul in thee!

Unsustain'd by thee, I fall;
Send the strength for which I call;
Weaker than a bruised reed,
Help I ev'ry moment need.
All my hopes on thee depend;
Love me, save me to the end;
Give me thy continuing grace;
Take the everlasting praise.

31 JULY.

(212)

OFFER unto GOD thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Who so offers praise, glorifies me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of GOD, PSALM l. 14, 15, &c. See also ISA. xxv. 9.

NOTHING moves GOD more to hear us, than the glorifying him by faith with thanksgiving, and the keeping up a filial confidence in him, as our reconciled Father in CHRIST, and nothing quickeneth us more in faith, than these surest proofs of the hearing of our prayers. Thus GOD will certainly hear and deliver us, since all his ways are only designed to strengthen us in faith, and to save our souls. What need we then to be afraid in times of trouble? ought we not rather to draw near to GOD in prayer and thanksgiving, and glorify him even beforehand; confidently believing, that we shall certainly meet with new deliverances and quickenings of faith?

To what a stubborn frame
Has sin reduc'd our mind!
What strange ungrateful wretches we?
And GOD as strangely kind.
Turn, turn us, mighty GOD,
And mould our souls afresh;

Break, sovereign grace, these hearts of stone,
And give us hearts of flesh,
Let old ingratitude
Provoke our weeping eyes,
And hourly as new mercies fall,
Let hourly thanks arise.

SAY ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings, ISAIA. iii. 10. Therefore mark the perfect man, and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace, PSALM xxxvii. 37.

MANY are for having that first which is not to be expected till the end; they would be glad of the triumph, but will not fight; the waiting for the LORD seems to them too long: But for the most glorious promises we must often wait the longest. Jacob was obliged to wait longer than Esau, though he had greater promises than he: and how long was it before the promise of CHRIST, the greatest of all, was accomplished? It ought therefore well to be observed, that it is said at last, "It shall be well with the righteous, and the end of the upright is peace;" when his faith, love and patience are tried enough in the furnace of afflictions, then the acceptable year shall come, and the blessed days of joy will appear.

As sparks break out of burning coals,
And still are upwards borne;
So grief is rooted in our souls,
And man grows up to mourn.
Yet with my GOD I leave my cause,
And trust his promis'd grace;

He rules me by his well-known laws
Of love and righteousness.
Not all the pains that e'er I bore
Shall spoil my future peace,
For death and hell can do no more
Than what my Father please.

2 AUG.

(214)

EXamine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart, PSALM xxvi. 2. Search me, O GOD, and know my heart, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting, PSALM cxxxix. 23, 24.

WOULD David, the man after GOD's own heart, not trust himself, but present his heart to the LORD to be tried; much less can or ought we to trust our hearts: "For he that trusts in his heart," says the wise man, "is a fool," PROV. xxviii. 26. We have more reason to be afraid of our own hearts, than of all other enemies. Nor can always the time of the operations of GOD exactly be accounted for: sometimes it is hard to determine it in ourselves, much more in respect to others. This is assuming the office of the searcher of hearts, censuring the holy Spirit, and modelling every thing to one manner of working. By experience we find, it is not with one as with another. Some may be worked upon in quite a different manner from what we have been; and such are perhaps the changes even in one hour, that the end may seem to be no more than the beginning, though all goes regular in the sight of GOD. This should check our judgment of others, and make us cautious in advising and directing them in matters which concern their souls.

LORD, search my soul, try ev'ry thought;
Though my own heart accuse me not

Of walking in a false disguise,
I beg the trial of thine eyes.

3 AUG.

(215)

LORD, all my desire is before thee. Search me, O GOD, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting, PSALM xxxviii. 9. and cxxxix. 23, 24.

ENCOURAGED by thy blessed word of promise, O LORD, that before men call, thou wilt answer, and whilst they are yet speaking, thou wilt hear, ISA. lxxv. 24. I now draw nigh to thee, and present my supplication before thee. Teach me by thy word and Spirit, the things of my everlasting peace; let my soul be cast in the mold of the gospel, and let me be obedient to thy will in all things. Manifest thyself unto me, as thou dost not to the world; shew me my inward corruptions, and let me see into the depth of iniquity that is in my heart; grant me that "fear of the LORD, which is the beginning of wisdom; incline my heart unto thy testimonies; lead me into all truth;" help me to learn, that "he that believeth will not make haste;" restrain the impetuosity of my natural temper, that I may do all things deliberately, as becometh one that feareth alway, that is ever looking unto thee for guidance and direction. LORD preserve me calm in my spirit, gentle in my commands, and watchful that I speak not unadvisedly with my lips; moderate in my purposes, yielding in my temper, where the honour of my GOD is not immediately concerned; and ever steadfast where needful. LORD, grant me thy protection, and may thy blessing be upon me, that I bring not an evil report upon that good land I have been permitted to spy out; and approve myself ever mindful that those that honour thee, thou wilt honour. Amen.

Be with me, LORD, where'er I go,
Learn me what thou woud'st have me do;

Suggest whate'er I think or say,
Direct me in the narrow way.

4 AUG.

(216)

STRIVE to enter in at the *strait gate*, LUKE xiii. 24. *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, PHIL. ii. 12. *Forgetting those things that are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before*, PHIL. iii. 13.

HE that feeds only upon CHRIST, and yet with fear and trembling works out his salvation, is in the right way; the former preventing discouragement, and the latter presumption. Grant, O LORD, that I may still continue to fight the good fight of faith, and never look back on the flesh-pots of Egypt; and “rather choose to suffer affliction with “the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” May nothing but the painful death which thou sufferedst for me, have always a place in my heart; that thereby all unbelief and slavish fears may be destroyed on one hand, and all security on the other; so as to walk at all times and in all places with holy and filial reverence, as in thy presence. Amen.

So new-born babes desire the breast,
To feed, and grow and thrive;
So saints with joy the gospel taste,
And by the gospel live.

Grace, like an uncorrupted seed,
Abides and reigns within;

Immortal principles forbid
The sons of God to sin.

Not by the terrors of a slave
Do they perform his will;
But with the noblest powers they have
His sweet commands fulfil,

5 AUG.

(217)

CREATE in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, PSALM li. 10. See GOD's answer, EZEK. xi. 19, 20.

A GLORIOUS promise! but you may rely upon it, O my soul, and plead it in thy prayer, for it will certainly be accomplished. "And blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see GOD," MATT. v. 8. In regard to justification, we are perfectly clean by CHRIST's atonement: but in regard to sanctification, our hearts are not perfectly clean yet, but we have still need to pray, "Create in me a clean heart." Amen. O LORD! may thy blood and spirit cleanse and sanctify me thoroughly from all my sins. Amen.

Bless'd with the joys of innocence
Adam our father stood,
Till he debas'd his soul to sense,
And eat th' unlawful food.

Now we are born a sensual race,
To sinful joys inclin'd;
Reason has lost its native place,
And flesh enslav'd the mind.

Great GOD! renew our ruin'd frame,
Our broken pow'rs restore;
Inspire us with a heav'nly flame,
And flesh shall reign no more.

Eternal Spirit! write thy law
Upon our inward parts;
And let the second Adam draw
His image on our hearts.

6 AUG.

(218)

AND *Enoch walked with GOD,*— GEN. V. 24.

HAPPY they, who in their early days are turned from sin, themselves, and the world, by repentance towards GOD, and faith in the promised seed; as Enoch was, who from the time of his conversion walked with GOD in a continued progress in his work and ways. To “walk with GOD,” implies, an avowed dissent from a sinful generation, coming out from among them, and cleaving to the LORD; as Noah, and Caleb; and this GOD requires of all, 2 COR. vi. 17.—A realizing the divine presence, and fearing GOD always; as Joseph, Nehemiah, and David did; thereby avoiding every thing that would offend him, or hide the light of his countenance:—openly professing an attachment to him and his service, as the highest honour, and best interest.—It implies also, an holy intimacy and communion with GOD, which is kept up by constant meditation, prayer and praise; hearkening to the voice of his word and Spirit, and walking humbly before him; hereby holiness is promoted and encouraged in the soul. Thus “Enoch walked with GOD;” thus he maintained a holy confidence in him, committing all his ways to him, always expecting help from him, and rejoicing in the hopes of being with him for ever.

For these happy ends the grace of GOD is sufficient for all that see their want, and ask it. The LORD help us to seek it, that, like Enoch, we may walk with GOD here below, and live with Him for ever in glory. *Amen.*

7 AUG.

(219)

SEE that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Be ye therefore not unwise, but understanding what the will of the LORD is, EPH. v. 15, 17. That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence, PHIL. i. 10. See also LUKE xii. 36.

BELIEVERS have nothing more at heart than the will of GOD; being once convinced of that, they immediately set about it at all hazards; but sometimes they cannot come to a thorough true knowledge of the same without great conflicts and patience, HEB. x. 36. For the flesh is oftentimes exceeding cunning and froward, often calling out, "But howsoever let me run," 2 SAM. xviii. 23. But the LORD will nevertheless carry them through. Yes, LORD! this thou hast done innumerable times. O that I might trust thee also for the time to come, and not be so weak in faith any more.

Beloved self must be deny'd,
The mind and will renew'd;
Passion suppress'd and patience try'd,
And vain desires subdu'd.

Flesh is a dang'rous foe to grace,
Where it prevails and rules;

Flesh must be humbled, pride abas'd,
Lest they destroy our souls.

LORD! can a feeble, helpless worm,
Fulfil a task so hard?

Thy grace must all my works perform,
And give the free reward.

IF ye be reproached for the name of CHRIST, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of GOD resteth upon you, 1 PET. iv. 14, 19. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, for, behold your reward is great in heaven, LUKE vi. 23. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me, &c. MATT. x. 32, 33.

INWARD sufferings are greater afflictions than those outward persecutions, which christians bring not upon themselves by giving unnecessary offence, by self-will, imprudent and unreasonable behaviour, soaring beyond the limits of the written word of GOD: but neither do they shun it, being willing to suffer every thing after the will of GOD, rather than to hurt the cause of GOD in the least, and depart a hair's breadth from his express will, out of complaisance to the world. They openly confess CHRIST their LORD, and do not mind to be called fools by the wicked, as they are persuaded that at last they will call themselves by that name; therefore they care not for the approbation and praise of the world, but count it a great honour to bear the reproaches of CHRIST.

Bless'd are the suff'rers who partake
Of pain and shame for JESUS' sake;
Their souls shall triumph in the LORD,
Glory and joy are their reward.

The Lamb shall lead his heav'nly flock
Where living fountains rise,
And love divine shall wipe away
The sorrows of their eyes.

9 AUG.

(221)

TAKE heed to your spirit, MALACHI ii. 15. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? JER. xvii. 9.

EVEN believers feel this wickedness of their hearts, PSALM xxx. 7, 8. For the heart has many secret ways and private loop-holes, that is, sinful lusts can hide themselves so well, that they seem to be quite overcome : but upon occasion, especially when we are careless, they spring up again, though sometimes under other, and perhaps quite spiritual names. Therefore we ought always to be jealous of ourselves. For the flesh is never more fleshly and dangerous, than when it has the most spiritual appearance; and covers its lusts with the holiness and spirituality of angels.

Sin has a thousand treach'rous arts
To practise on the mind ;
With flatt'ring looks she tempts our hearts,
But leaves a sting behind.

With names of virtue she deceives
The aged and the young ;
And while the heedless wretch believes,
She makes his fetters strong.

She pleads for all the joys she brings,
And gives a fair pretence ;
But cheats the soul of heav'nly things,
And chains it down to sense.

So on a tree divinely fair
Grew the forbidden food ;
Our mother took the poison there,
And tainted all her blood.

10 AUG.

(222)

O Send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles, PSALM xliii. 3.—Divine answer; The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, PROV. iv. 18.

THE wiser we are in our own conceits, the more negligent are we in prayer, and more destitute of true wisdom and faith. “ For the “ LORD gives sight only to the blind, and to the babes,” who pray for it. Therefore the deepest humblings go before the greatest blessings. **O** my blessed Saviour! since I am always blind and ignorant of myself, if I am not guided by thine eyes; I desire always to look up to thee, and do every thing under thy direction.

Prevent me, lest I harbour pride,
Lest I in my own strength confide;
Shew me my weakness; let me see
I have my pow’r, my all from thee.
Enrich me alway with thy love;
My kind protector ever prove;
Thy signet put upon my breast,
And let thy Spirit on me rest.

Assist and teach me how to pray;
Incline my nature to obey;
What thou abhorrest, that let me flee,
And only love what pleases thee.
O may I never do my will,
But thine, and only thine fulfil;
Let all my time, and all my waies
Be spent, and ended to thy praise.

BY grace ye are saved, EPHES. ii. 5.

To rely on grace, and desire to be saved only by free grace, is a sweet exercise; but so far from being practised enough, that we have all need to learn the prayer of the publican better still, since the Pharisee is ever busy to creep in again. But care must be taken, that we do not build our faith only upon the sweet enjoyments of the grace of God in our hearts, but also upon the grace in the heart of God, as it is recovered by CHRIST and promised to us through CHRIST. For which reason God sometimes denies us sensible enjoyments, that true faith may begin to act like itself, and depend upon nothing but his free grace in CHRIST. And this we have also boldness to do, should we even seem to fall short of the due measure of faith, godly sorrow and repentance. For since there is no merit to be placed in these things, there is no certain measure and degree prescribed to all, but it is enough truly to hate sin, to desire grace, and sincerely to enter upon the christian race.

'Tis not by works of righteousness,
Which our own hands have done;
But we are sav'd by sovereign grace,
Abounding thro' his Son.

'Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;

'Tis by the water and the blood
Our souls are wash'd from sin.

Rais'd from the dead, we live anew;
And justify'd by grace,
We shall appear in glory too,
And see our Father's face.

12 AUG.

(224)

WHOSOEVER committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law; and ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, 1 JOHN iii. 4, 5.

THERE is a far greater power in the blood of CHRIST to save and cleanse, than in sin to defile and destroy, ROM. viii. 3. The law became weak to do good, but it hath power to condemn; "The strength of sin is the law;" the law gives strength to sin, because, by virtue of the curse of the law, sin reigns, and defiles the souls of men, through that righteous curse; "The soul that sins shall die." But the blood of JESUS CHRIST hath greater power to save, than sin, together with the law, hath to condemn: for the blood of CHRIST takes away and abolisheth it utterly; where this blood is applied, and brought home, sin itself cannot ruin that soul. The soul is poisoned, and corrupted by sin; but the blood of CHRIST takes away that poison, and makes the soul pure and holy, as if it had never sinned. Therefore as to those discouragements, "I shall never get power against these corruptions, they will be my ruin;" these are deep reflectings on JESUS CHRIST, as if sin were stronger than He; as if thy sin were more powerful to damn thee, than CHRIST is to save thee.

13 AUG.

(225)

BE ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee, **PSALM xxxii 9.** Therefore, if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, **1 PET. i. 17.**

O WRETCHED man! dost thou really believe that God is the judge of all things, even what is privately done, the secrets of the heart not excepted; how canst thou meet thy Judge in this thy security of hypocrisy, without a true change of the heart? Dost thou think that there is such a thing as dissembling, excusing, or escaping then, as there is now? By no means! O begin therefore in time to consider it well, How wilt thou appear before that awful, holy and impartial judgment-seat? What canst thou answer for thyself! and what must then become of thee?

O God, mine inmost soul convert!
And deeply on my thoughtful heart
Eternal things impress;
Give me to feel their solemn weight,
And tremble on the brink of fate,
And 'wake to righteousness.

Be this my one great business here,
With serious industry and fear
My future bliss to ensure,
Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
And suffer all thy righteous will,
And to the end endure.

Q

14 AUG.

(226)

BE strong and of a good courage, I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Only be thou strong and very courageous! O sweet commandment! Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. O glorious promise! JOSHUA i. 5, 6,
9 Nay, I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me, ISA. xlv. 4.

GOD requires nothing but faith, which animates to do great things, makes chearful, strong and easy in difficulties. Therefore have thou always the highest confidence in GOD, and fear nothing; for he is with thee in all things. He that has but this one care and fear, not to displease him, need not care for or fear any thing else. His safety is insured in the promise of GOD, who will keep him harmless in all things.

Awake, our souls, (away our fears,
Let ev'ry trembling thought be gone)
Awake and run the heav'nly race,
And put a chearful courage on.

True, 'tis a strait and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint;

But they forget the mighty GOD,
That feeds the strength of ev'ry saint.

From Him, the overflowing spring,
Our souls shall drink a fresh supply;
While such as trust their native strength
Shall melt away, and droop, and die.

15 AUG.

(227)

BEHOLD the LAMB of GOD, who takes away the sins of the world!
JOHN i. 29. *These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of GOD, and serve him day and night in his temple,*
REV. vii. 14, 15.

HE that washes himself continually in the blood of CHRIST, does not make light of sin, but detests it above all things; for what can be more abominable than sin, since it cannot be taken away but by the blood of the Son of GOD? This humbles and makes us serious; and without this, it is not right with our souls. To speak continually of the blood of the Lamb, and yet be puffed up, boast, and trifle with sin, cannot agree together.

Now will I hate those lusts of mine
That crucify'd my GOD,
Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood.
Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart has so decreed;

Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.
Whilst with a melting, broken heart,
My murder'd LORD I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murder'ers too.

16 AUG.

(228)

VERILY I say unto you, they have their reward, MATT. vi. 3. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing, 2 TIM. iv. 8.

For this crown, faith strives. And because this faith justifies, it makes the world say, Well, I also believe: But where is their conflict and conquest? It is answered; I rely on CHRIST and grace. But Canaan was also a free gift of grace, and yet it was not taken without conflicts. And moreover, as worldly people are not acquainted with the wickedness of their hearts, they do not trust alone upon grace, but upon their outward form; self love and pride reigning in their hearts.

No works nor duties of your own
Can for the smallest sin atone:
The robes that nature may provide
Will not your least pollutions hide.

Ye sons of pride, that kindle coals
With your own hands to warm your souls,

Walk in the light of your own fire,
Enjoy the sparks that ye desire.

This is your portion at my hands,
Hell waits you with her iron bands;
You shall lie down in sorrow there,
In death, in darkness and despair.

17 AUG.

(229)

LET us run with patience the race that is set before us, HEB. xii. 1.

IT seems a contradiction to run with patience; for running is active, and patience passive; and therefore one is distinct from the other, if not opposite; but he that runs, and wants patience, will never get to the end of his race: For in the race of GOD's commandments, men have foul play; one comes and rails on him for his zeal, for running so fast, when he thinks himself too slow; another gives him a blow, and strikes him down, and up he gets, and runs again. Every man will make room, and give way to him that is in a race here, while he that runs the heavenly race, may expect, and will find many stand in his way, and stop him all they can, so that he will have great need of patience; without it every thing will offend him. What is a wise man, a zealous man without patience? He will bear nothing, suffer nothing, and can do no great good. David had many enemies, that spake mischievous things against him, and laid snares for his life; but he was "as a deaf man that heard not, and as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth." Saul was twice in his power, yet he would not avenge himself of him: he wanted neither courage nor wisdom; he had a stirring spirit, a working head, was sensible of wrongs, knew himself innocent, his adversaries malicious; his thoughts must needs be troubled, and yet he is his own man under all; he committed his cause to GOD, his patience was in exercise, and he waited GOD's time of deliverance. CHRIST's active and passive obedience made him a complete Mediator; may thy active and passive graces, reader, make thee a complete christian!

Awake our souls (away our fears
Let ev'ry trembling thought be gone)
Awake and run the heav'nly race,
And put a cheerful courage on.

From CHRIST, the overflowing spring,
Our souls shall drink a fresh supply;
While such as trust their native strength
Shall melt away, and droop and die.

18 AUG.

(230)

WHOM GOD hath set forth to be a propitiation, (or a propitiatory) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of GOD, RÔM. iii. 25.

GOD hath set forth the propitiation ; from all eternity he proposed CHRIST to be the propitiatory ; the spring of all is from the Father, who is love : he proposed, revealed, and made CHRIST known to Adam, to Abraham, to the prophets ; he proposed the propitiatory as an object of faith in all the sacrifices, that were types of CHRIST ; this propitiatory is clearly and fully set forth in the gospel-dispensation. In this plan the righteousness and justice of GOD is declared, while he vindicates the honour of his perfections and laws, and maintains the authority of his government by punishing the offences of rebel-subjects in the sufferings of " the Surety, who was made sin, an offering for sin, that we might " be made the righteousness of GOD in him."

Whither shall I, a poor sinner, conscious of guilt, and apprehensive of wrath, fly for refuge ? Where shall I find it ? Where but under the covert of atoning blood ! While others have recourse to refuges of lies, and wou'd establish a righteousness of their own, " in the " LORD my righteousness I find rest and safety ; having fled for refuge to lay hold on the " hope set before me ; in CHRIST my hope, I shall have strong consolation." Does JEHOVAH, from this mercy-seat offer pardon to me, a rebel-sinner ? Do I hear his voice " beseeching me to be reconciled to him through CHRIST my propitiatory and peace ?" Shall I not hear this voice of mercy, and live, and joy in GOD through CHRIST, by whom I receive the atonement ! Will GOD commune with me from this mercy-seat, and bless me with the manifestations of his love ! O delightful interview, when most alone, retired from the world, but least alone when with my GOD ! O the inexpressible pleasure of secret devotion, of " a life hid with CHRIST in GOD !" If the contemplation of divine love here below is so ravishing, O what shall I experience above ! " My GOD, guide me here by " thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory."

19 AUG.

(23*)

NO man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon, MATT. VI. 24.

DOTH Satan tempt thee, either by pleasures, dignities, or profits? O my soul! stand upon thy guard, gird on thy strength with such thoughts as these; What can the world profit me, if the cares of it choak me? How can pleasures comfort me, if their sting poison me? Or what advancement is this, to be triumphing in honour before the face of men here, and to be trembling with confusion before the throne of God hereafter? What are the delights of the world, to the peace of my conscience, or the joy that is in the Holy Ghost? What are the applauses of men, to the crown prepared by God? Or what is the gain of the world, to the loss of my soul? The vanity of the creature is far beneath the excellency of my soul; and the things of time not worthy to be mentioned with the things of eternity. Two Masters of such opposite principles as God and Mammon, I cannot serve; therefore, Satan, upon the most deliberate consideration, I must give thee and thy service up, for thou biddest me to my loss.

20 AUG.

(232)

O Taste and see that the LORD is good, PSALM xxxiv. 8. JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, HEB. xiii. 8.

THERE is an infinite fulness of all spiritual blessings treasured up in CHRIST JESUS for all his people; and out of his fulness they do receive, even grace for grace. But alas! we are slow of heart to believe the truth: we please ourselves with small things, and come slowly forward to a daily growth out of that fulness. Young converts, enamoured with what they have in hand, or living upon their feelings, are ready to flee from knowledge, as something dangerous and destructive of holiness: and mere professors are apt to deny and even deride those precious feelings, as though the affections were mere neutrals in the Christian religion, and that the whole consisted in having a crouded head. Come then, O my soul, divest thyself from the pride of party, and the strife of tongues: be thou an humble supplicant at the feet of JESUS, for a live coal from off the altar, to purge away thine iniquity, and to warm thy affections; and likewise for the aids of the holy Spirit, to lead thee into "the knowledge of the only true GOD and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent." Then shalt thou not only taste but see, not only see but taste, both sweetly taste, and clearly see, that "the LORD is good."

O the rich depths of love divine!
Of bliss a boundless store;
Dear Saviour, let me call thee mine,
I cannot wish for more.

On thee alone my hope relies,
Beneath thy cross I fall;
My LORD, my life, my sacrifice,
My Saviour, and my all.

WE speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which GOD ordained before the world to our glory, 1 COR. ii. 7.

THERE are some things declared in the gospel, which are absolutely its own, that are proper and peculiar unto it; such as have no foot-steps in the law, or in the light of nature, but are of a pure Revelation, peculiar to the gospel. Of this nature are all things concerning the love and will of GOD in CHRIST JESUS; the mystery of his Incarnation, of his Offices, and whole Mediation, of the dispensation of the Spirit, and our Participation thereof, and our Union with CHRIST thereby; our Adoption, Justification, and effectual Sanctification thence proceeding: In a word, every thing that belongs unto the purchase and application of saving grace, is of this sort. These things are purely and properly evangelically, peculiar to the gospel alone.

Hence the apostle Paul, unto whom the dispensation of it was committed, puts that eminency upon them, that (in comparison) he resolved to insist on nothing else in his preaching, 1 COR. ii. 2. And to that purpose doth he describe his ministry, EPH. iii. 7-11.

Reader, observe these two things, what GOD *reveals* in his word, let thy reason submit unto: what he *proposes* as objects, or matter of faith, beg of him to enable thee to believe.

BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in CHRIST,
EPHES. i. 3.

FROM natural constitution we earnestly expect present gratification. It is by no means sufficient therefore to explain to us our duty, or enforce it by future rewards and punishments. There must be pleasures at hand, to counteract the solicitations of sin, and outbid, as it were, all that forcerefs can offer. The religion of JESUS is constituted in this manner.—It brings the possession of the best happiness here; a rich foretaste in this life of heavenly glory. Salvation cometh of the LORD to the sinner upon believing, just as a most ample estate bequeathed to a beggar in debt; at once it alters his whole condition, pays all he owes, supplies all he wants, gives him rank, figure and authority, to which before he was a perfect stranger.

Such blessedness in the pardon of all my sins, in access to GOD with confidence, in victory over my spiritual enemies, give me, O my GOD, to enjoy!

Thou only sov'reign of my heart,
My refuge, my almighty friend;
How can my soul from thee depart,
On whom alone my hopes depend?

Eternal life thy words impart,
On these my fainting spirit lives;
Here sweeter comforts cheer my heart,
Than all the round of nature gives.

Let earth's alluring joys combine;
While Thou art near in vain they call;
One smile, one blissful smile of thine,
My dearest LORD, outweighs them all.

Low at thy feet my soul wou'd lie,
Here safety dwells, and peace divine;
Still let me live beneath thine eye,
For life, eternal life, is thine.

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23 AUG.

(235)

SPARE not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited, ISA. liv. 2, 3.

How comfortable is it to the religious man to behold an increase of the true worshippers of GOD! and more especially in that place, where his soul has dwelt as among lions, and been "vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked?" To see the banner of CHRIST set up there, and numbers flock unto it, as doves to their windows—to see the kingdom of Satan weaken and contract, and the kingdom of GOD and his CHRIST strengthen and enlarge—to see the hand of the LORD protecting and providing for his people—going before them, like the pillar and cloud, refreshing them by day and by night:—This is indeed a feast of fat things. LORD, grant that I may be thankful for what I have already seen, and may behold thy glory thus displayed more and more. And while thou lengthenest our cords, do thou help us to strengthen our stakes; by holding fast the form of sound words, living as persons professing godliness, shewing that we are christians indeed, by love to each other, and keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Thus shall our light shine before men, and the light of thy gospel break forth on the right hand and on the left, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

24 AUG.

(236)

IF a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully, 2 TIM. ii. 5. namely, in faith, by which we have the victory. And as the enemies return again and again, and always become more crafty and more strong, we must continually be in arms. *Until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,* MATT. xi. 12.

IF those cannot expect to be crowned, who strive, but not lawfully, what must become of those who do not strive at all? O Lord, strengthen me therefore to get the victory, for it greatly exalts thy glory if the power of mine enemies is broke: and the least degree of thy grace and strength is able to overcome the greatest power of sin at last, which is thy promise, and cannot fail of being performed; since in the former there is the promise of life and growth, whilst the latter is condemned to death, and actually dies more and more nailed to the cross of CHRIST.

Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
And gird the gospel armour on;
March to the gates of endless joys,
Where thy great captain-Saviour's gone.
What tho' the prince of darkness rage,
And waste the fury of his spite?

Eternal chains confine him down
To fiery deeps, and endless night.
What tho' thine inward lusts rebel;
'Tis but a struggling gasp for life;
The weapons of victorious grace
Shall slay thy sins, and end the strife.

25 AUG.

(237)

SO then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of GOD that sheweth mercy, ROM. ix. 16. Thou hast a little strength, REV. iii. 8. But go in this thy night, &c. Surely I will be with thee, JUDGES vi 14, 16.

A LITTLE strength is also the strength of GOD through CHRIST the second Adam, and consequently stronger than the power of Satan and the first Adam, should it seem ever so strong. Nay, it is the death of the old man already, and kills him by degrees more and more; till at last, when we drop this body of sin it will destroy him entirely. Believers in such a state may think themselves weaker than before they had any grace, not being able now to put such a force upon themselves as formerly. But it is to be remembered, that hypocrisy and proud nature, desirous of being seen and taken notice of, sometimes can outdo grace in many outward things, and have a better appearance in the eyes of man: for weak christians, not being willing to be worked upon by nature any longer, and yet having but little strength, cannot put such a constraint upon themselves continually, but they may be in this manner tossed to and fro; which the LORD wisely permits for their good, to convince them the more of their own insufficiency and nothingness, that they may rely on the strength of the LORD. Therefore we must not give over praying and hoping in this case; but as it is only the mercy and power of CHRIST, which preserves and strengthens the poor and feeble, we rather ought to be more earnest in drawing near to him with all our misery, weariness and nakedness.

Mere mortal pow'r shall fade and die,
And youthful vigour cease;

But we that wait upon the Lord,
Shall feel our strength increase.

26 AUG,

(238)

IF after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, 2 PET. ii. 20.

SOME not only deny strong temptations, but even all inward evil suggestions and strivings against the same, especially in experienced christians; but it is quite the contrary: for beginners strive generally more against the outward pollutions of the world, whilst the experienced turn their force more against their inward spiritual iniquities. Therefore take heed to your spirit, though your meaning be ever so good, and your assurance ever so great. Be not high-minded, for fear of falling. Beware of all sins; for the least may unawares and by degrees draw thee into many others, so as to be at last entangled in such a manner, that without great watchfulness it will be impossible to be disengaged, therefore be not deceived: flee all occasions of sin. Say not within thyself, It is no matter; it concerns only outward things, which do not belong to the essence of christianity: for such outward liberty is a sure evidence of a false inward levity and lightness of mind. And by conforming to the world, we give a good handle to the enemy of souls to ruin us; and by sad experience we shall be convinced in time, that our latter end is worse than the beginning.

O for a persevering pow'r
To keep thy just commands !

We would defile our hearts no more,
No more pollute our hands,

27 AUG.

(239)

IF it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men, Rom. xii. 18.

THERE is much contest in the world about *meum* and *tuum*, that is mine and thine; but believers taking CHRIST for their only property, whom nobody can take from them, have, in him alone, immense treasures, and lasting peace. And since wrath and anger turn into nothing but disquietness, and are punished by themselves, why dost thou suffer thyself to be easily moved by them? The least provocation, even a single word perhaps, will stir up the corruption of thy heart, so as to change thy countenance, and make thee utter dreadful words. Therefore consider how GOD bears with thee, and what an abomination anger is. It is a fire from hell, the true image of the old dragon: but being called to bear the image of GOD, and bring forth the fruits of the good Spirit, thou art to follow the lamb-like mind of CHRIST; and to that purpose it is highly necessary first, to avoid all occasions of strife and contention. Secondly, to bridle our tongue, if quarrels arise. Thirdly, to suffer, when we are wronged. Fourthly, to pray directly, and quench the sparks of fire, before they break out into a flame. This is the easiest and the only method to prevent great troubles, and lead a peaceful happy life, for anger carries uneasiness, and love a sweet rest in itself.

Bless'd are the men of peaceful life,
Who quench the coals of growing strife;

They shall be call'd the heirs of bliss,
The sons of God, the God of peace.

28 AUG.

(240)

HAVING therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS, &c. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; having our hearts sprinkled (with the blood of CHRIST, by which he once entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, and purged our consciences from dead works, to serve the living GOD) from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, HEB. x. 19, 22.

CHRIST has for ever purged our sins by himself; “for by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” chap. x. 14. And to this sprinkling of the blood of CHRIST all believers, even the weakest, are to come; that is to say, he has the forgiveness of sins in his blood. This is his element and life; thus he “lives by the faith” of the Son of GOD, who also loved him,” always applying his righteousness to his soul, and pleading his merits before his heavenly Father, which keeps his conscience pure and easy.

They find access at ev’ry hour
To GOD within the veil;
Hence they derive a quick’ning pow’r,
And joye that never fail.

O happy soul! O glorious state
Of ever-flowing grace!
To dwell so near their Father’s seat,
And see his lovely face.

THAT *which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them, ROM. i. 19.*

THERE are some things declared, and enjoined in the gospel, which have their foundation in the law and light of nature; such are all the moral duties, which are taught therein; these the remaining light of nature, though obscurely, yet does teach and confirm; the apostle, speaking of mankind in general, says, "That which may be known of God is manifest in them;" the essential properties of God, rendering our moral duty to him necessary, are known by the light of nature: And by the same light are men able to make a judgment of their actions, whether they be good or evil, ROM. ii. 14, 15. The same law and light, which discovereth these things, do also enjoin their observance. Thus it is with all men antecedently unto the preaching of the gospel to them. The gospel superadds two things to the minds of men. 1. It directs us to a right performance of these things, from a right principle, by a right rule, and to a right end, so that they, and we in them, may obtain acceptance with God; hereby it gives them a new nature, and turns moral duties into evangelical obedience. 2. By a communication of that Spirit, which is annexed unto its dispensation, it supplies us with strength for their performance, in the manner it prescribes.

30 AUG.

(242)

WHO shall separate us from the love of CHRIST? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, Rom. viii 35, 37.

STARS shine brightest in the darkest night; torches are better for beating; grapes come not to the proof, till they come to the press; spices smell best when bruised; young trees root the faster for shaking; gold looks brighter for scowering; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; the palmtree proves the better for pressing; camomile the more you tread it, the more you spread it. Such is the condition of all God's children, they are then most triumphant, when most tempted; most glorious, when most afflicted; most in the favour of God, when least in man's; as their conflicts, so their conquests, as their tribulations, so their triumphs; true salamanders, that live best in the furnace of persecution; so that heavy afflictions are the best benefactors to heavenly affections; and where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest; and grace, that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves, is then most fragrant, when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out.

Our lives, our blood, we here present,
If for thy sake they may be spent;
Fulfil thy sov'reign counsel, LORD,
Thy will be done, thy name ador'd.

Give us thy strength, thou God of power;
Then let men scorn, and Satan roar;
Thy faithful witnesses we'll be,
'Tis fix'd—we can do all thro' thee.

31 AUG.

(243)

RISE up, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land, &c. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O! my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, &c. CANT. ii. 10—14.

O LORD! how often has it been winter with me, but thou hast always quickened me again. Grant that by these experiences I may be so used to thy ways, as always to expect the best from thee in every thing, and to have only this one care, namely, how I may please thee as thy bride and dove, and be accepted through thee with thy Father. Let my faith be strengthened in such a manner by all thy methods, that at last I may have boldness and find rest in thy wounds, since yet there is room for the greatest of sinners, even for me.

The voice of my beloved sounds
Over the rocks and rising grounds;
O'er hills of guilt, and seas of grief,
He leaps, he flies to my relief.

Gently he draws my heart along,
Both with his beauties and his tongue;
Rise, says my LORD, make haste away;
No mortal joys are worth thy stay.

The Jewish wint'ry state is gone,
The mists are fled, the spring comes on;
The sacred turtle-dove we hear
Proclaim the new, the joyful year.

And when we hear our JESUS say,
"Rise up, my love, make haste away!"
Our hearts would fain out-fly the wind,
And leave all earthly loves behind.

***B**E not conformed to this world, ROM. xii 2. And love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of GOD, abideth for ever, 1 JOHN ii. 15, 17.*

READER! whose will dost thou do? examine thyself. Perhaps thou thinkest to love the world and to do her will, cannot be so great a sin, since the most honest people do the same. But observe, as thou wouldst be saved, that if thou “lovest the world, the love of the Father is “not in thee;” and without this love of the Father, thou hast no faith; and being destitute of faith, thou hast no CHRIST, and consequently no life and salvation.

I send the things of earth away;
Away ye tempters of the mind,
False as the smooth deceitful sea,
And empty as the whistling wind.

Your streams were floating me along
Down to the gulph of black despair;
And whilst I listen'd to your song,
Your streams had e'en convey'd me there.

Now to the shining realms above
I stretch my hands, and glance my eyes;
O for the pinions of a dove,
To bear me to the upper skies!

LORD, I adore thy matchless grace,
That warn'd me of the dark abyss;
That drew me from those treach'rous seas,
And bid me seek superior bliss.

NOT fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance ;
 but as he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy, Note, in all manner of
 conversation, 1 PET. i. 14, 15. Give diligence to make your calling and elec-
 tion sure ; for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of
 the Gentiles, &c. 2 PET. i. 10. 1 PET. iv. 3.

NONE can be so sure of his salvation, as to be for ever free from fears
 and doubts ; for there is no assurance without conflicts : therefore all
 diligence is required to be evermore sure of it, so as to have boldness
 even in death. But let us take heed of presumption, since we do not
 know what may befall us at last ; and be careful not to despise and over-
 drive the weaker sort of christians, that by making general rules of
 our own experience, this comfortable doctrine of assurance may not
 be matter of torment to others.

How short and hasty is our life !
 How vast our soul's affairs !
 Yet senseless mortals vainly strive
 To lavish out their years.

God from on high invites us home,
 But we march heedless on ;
 And ever hast'ning to the tomb,
 Stoop downward as we run.

How we deserve the deepest hell,
 That slight the joys above !
 What chains of vengeance should we feel,
 That break such cords of love !

Draw us, O God ! with sov'reign grace,
 And lift our thoughts on high ;
 That we may end this mortal race,
 And see salvation nigh.

3 SEPT.

(246)

FOR the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, LUKE
xix. 10.

FINDING in myself a sincere desire to be saved, as well from the power as the punishment of sin, conscious too as I am of an hearty acquiescence in the gospel covenant, it is dishonourable to the gracious master whose I profess myself, to go on from day to day in heaviness. My sins cannot be my destruction, for JESUS CHRIST suffered for them. If CHRIST is not my Saviour, then is not the saying of GOD faithful: a thought which my soul abhors. Consider, O my soul, that it was the very purpose of CHRIST's coming into the world to save sinners, circumstanced just as thou art! yea, though thy sins be as scarlet, yea, though they be red as crimson; be not then cast down, O my soul, and be not disquieted within me, but encourage a cheerful hope in thy covenant-GOD, and instead of poring only upon thy sins, consider the exceeding love of CHRIST in dying for them; and, constrained by a sense of that love, do thy diligence to live unto him; and for this he will enable thee by his holy Spirit.

The LORD of life and glory stands;
Aloud he cries, and spreads his hands;
He calls ten thousand sinners round,
And sends a voice from ev'ry wound.

" An ample pardon here I give,
And bid the sentenc'd rebel live;
Shew him my Father's smiling face,
And lodge him in his dear embrace,

I purge from sin's detested stain,
And make the crimson white again;
Lead to celestial joys refin'd,
And lasting as the deathless mind."

O JESU, let me doubt no more;
But hear, and wonder, and adore;
Till death shall make my last remove
To dwell for ever in thy love.

4 SEPT.

(247)

REPENT ye, (O change your minds) *and believe the gospel*, MARK
i. 15.

O THE great comfort, that GOD requires only faith; and such a faith which is his own gift, and is held forth truly to every one that will receive his pardon, grace and love. But that this may not be understood of presumptuous notions in our heads, it is well to be observed, that true repentance goes before faith; by which the heart is not only convinced of sin, and filled with godly sorrow, but changed so as to hate and abandon all sins. It is not enough to leave off some of our sins, or be outwardly reformed; but it must be an inward and thorough change of the whole mind; for if one sin be reigning, we cannot be said to have repented, and received that faith and power of GOD which overcomes the world and sin.

Mistaken souls! that dream of heav'n,
And make their empty boast
Of inward joys, and sins forgiv'n,
While they are slaves to lust!
Vain are our fancies airy flights,
If faith be cold and dead;

None but a living pow'r unites
To CHRIST, the living head.
'Tis faith that purifies the heart;
'Tis faith that works by love;
That bids our sins and lusts depart,
And lifts our souls above.

5 SEPT.

(248)

WHAT I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch, MARK xiii. 37.

ON a day set apart for the celebration of some great event, how anxious are the people to get in time to the place appointed? what earnestness is to be seen in their looks? As earnest should we be in watching for the hour in which our LORD shall come, that we may not be ashamed before him. A heart deceived by sin may suggest many arguments against this holy earnestness, but they are the reasonings of folly. It is a general warning, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH." Almost every day affords an instance of some one hurried into eternity on a sudden. Was not hourly watchfulness necessary, a merciful GOD would not permit such sudden deaths. But he has sounded the alarm, "Ye know not what hour our LORD doth come." Give me grace, O LORD, to live always as if I heard that solemn voice sounding continually in my ears, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment."

Awake, my drowsy soul, awake,
And view the threat'ning scene;
Legions of foes encamp around,
And treach'ry lurks within.

Now to the work of GOD awake;
Behold thy Master near;
The various, arduous task pursue,
With vigour and with fear.

The awful register goes on;
Th' account will surely come;
And op'ning day, or closing night,
May bear me to my doom.

Tremendous thought! How deep it strikes!
Yet like a dream it flies,
Till GOD's own voice the slumbers chase
From these deluded eyes.

NOW also, when I am old and grey-headed, O GOD, forsake me not, PSALM lxxi. 18. O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me: for I wait on thee, PSALM xxv. 20, 21.—Divine answer; Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am He, and even to your hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you, ISA. xli. 3, 4.

God never does nor can forsake me, since I am as near and as closely united to him as a child which is carried in the mother's womb. O great comfort! what can I have to fear? May I not expect every thing now confidently from him? Yes, and this is what pleases him above all things. Therefore I will "be careful for nothing, but in every thing "by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make my request known unto him," PHIL. iv. 6. always trusting that he will as certainly carry me through all difficulties to come, as he has done hitherto; so that I can even give him thanks for it beforehand. O LORD, grant that I may practise this better still.

My God, my everlasting hope,
I live upon thy truth;
Thine hands have held my childhood up,
And strengthen'd all my youth.

Still has my life new wonders seen,
Repeated ev'ry year;
Behold my days that yet remain,
I trust them to thy care.

7 SEPT.

(250)

TRUST ye not in lying words, saying, *The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these; but thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, &c.* JER. vii. 4, 5. Of true prayer and worship in spirit and in truth, see also JOHN iv. 24. ROM. xii. 1. JAMES i. 27.

As a contrite heart is the most pleasing temple of God; so speaking with God, in words of our own, as a child does with his father, is the best book of prayer. The most cunning method, by which Satan deceives many now, is, the mistaking of an extensive knowledge and assurance of their own making for true faith; or trusting on some outward forms of worship, sensible motives, or communion with others; and pretending too soon to evangelical experiences, liberties and building of souls up; though there was never a true change wrought in their own hearts. For what can all our reading, prayers, going to church and sacrament profit us, without this? Before all this shall be acceptable to the LORD, we must be renewed in our minds, and prove by our own words and deeds that we are the living temples of God.

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone
The LORD of ev'ry motion there:
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it has found repose in Thee.

O hide this self from me, that I
No more, but CHRIST in me may live!
My vile affections crucify;
Let not one darling lust survive:
In all things may I nothing see,
Nothing desire, or seek, but Thee.

8 SEPT.

(251)

FORSAKE me not, O LORD my GOD, be not far from me.—Divine answer; The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that has mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones, ISA. liv. 10—15.

SUCH as have never been destitute of comfort, do not relish this word. O LORD, as thou hast once quickened me by it in great distress, I will henceforth evermore take hold of it; and firmly believe, even without feeling, that thou wilt perform every thing punctually. Thou being my GOD in covenant, wilt never forsake me, but order all things for my good, adorn and carry me through, though all tempests should fall upon me, and every thing be dashed to pieces. This thy faithfulness requires.

Firm are the words which prophets give,
Sweet words on which believers live;
Each of them is the voice of God,
Who spoke and spread the skies abroad.

O! for a strong, a lasting faith,
To credit what th' Almighty saith!

T'embrace the message of his Son,
And call the joys of heav'n our own.

Then should the earth's old pillars shake,
And all the wheels of nature break;
Our steady souls should fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows rore.

9 SEPT.

(252)

LEAN not unto thine own understanding, PROV. iii. 5. Be not wise in your own conceits, ROM. xii. 17. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with GOD, 1 COR. iii. 19.

WHOSOEVER will do the will of the LORD, and is not wise in his own conceit, avoiding vain curiosity, and praying earnestly, shall certainly know the counsels and will of GOD, JOHN viii. 17. But he must depend more upon the word of GOD, than his own feeling; since our own spirit often mixes with spiritual sensations, and tempts us to lust, fear, presumption and pride: and many trust even to their scandalous whims and fancies, as if all were from our Saviour. O LORD, grant that I may be always jealous over myself, go in and out with prayer, and not err in any thing to the hurt of my soul.

Thus saith the Wisdom of the LORD,
Bless'd is the man that hears my word;
Keeps daily watch before my gates,
And at my feet for mercy waits.

The soul that seeks me shall obtain
Immortal wealth and heav'nly gain;

Immortal life is his reward,
Life and the favour of the LORD.

But the vile wretch that flies from me,
Doth his own soul an injury;
Fools that against my grace rebel,
Seek death, and love the road to hell,

—*SO we preach, and so ye believed, 1 COR. xv. 11.*

THE method of the gospel is this; first it proposeth and declareth things which are properly and peculiarly its own; so the apostle sets down the constant entrance of his preaching, 1 COR. xv. 3. It reveals its own mysteries, to lay them as the foundation of faith and obedience; it inlays them in the mind, and thereby conforms the whole soul unto them. See ROM. vi. 17. GAL. iv. 19. TIT. ii. 11, 12. 1 COR. iii. 11. 2 COR. iii. 18. This foundation being laid, without which it has, as it were, nothing to do with the souls of men, nor will proceed unto any other thing, with them by whom this its first work is refused; it then grafts all duties of moral obedience on this stock of faith in CHRIST JESUS. This is the method of the gospel, which the apostle Paul observes in all his epistles; first he declares the mysteries of faith, that are peculiar to the gospel, and then descends unto those moral duties which are regulated thereby; so we must first hear the gospel, and be acquainted with its discoveries, before we can believe aright; and, when our faith is rightly founded, it is to shew itself in the practice of all those good works that are required of us in the scriptures. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

HOW can I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD? GEN. xxxix. 9.

JOSEPH was a slave, and in a strange country; he was tempted by a lascivious, and vindictive mistress; had he complied, he would have been sure of secrecy and rewards; but if he resisted, he might expect her keenest resentment, if not a deprivation of his life. Yet all these could not influence him; he chooses to submit to every inconveniency and danger, rather than be guilty of so foul a crime, and sin against God. From hence we may learn, that the fear of God is a most effectual preservative against all criminal indulgences; it was this that restrained Joseph, and will have the same effect on all mankind upon all occasions, and in every scene of life: It strikes every passion, every spring of the human actions, and includes in it all the most powerful motives, by which the conduct of mankind is determined. If interest be the principal thing that sways us, that surely cannot be so certainly promoted, as by securing the favour of God, and avoiding his displeasure. If we are governed by our fears, he is the most formidable Being in the universe, to a mind that has perverted its faculties, and transgressed the laws of its nature: if by hope, he is the supreme good; if by love, he is the most amiable and perfect excellence; if by gratitude, he is the author of all our happiness.

I Have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, &c.
2 KINGS xxii. 8, 19.

THE priests, probably to save themselves the trouble of writing, and the people of reading the book at large, had furnished themselves with abstracts of the law, leaving out, or slightly mentioning, many parts thereof, and particularly the promises and threatenings; which Josiah was so much affected with, as being new to him. The book of God's law seems in our day to be lost, or a sealed book, to most of the congregations that profess themselves christians: imperfect hoodwinking abstracts of it are adapted, that hide the promised blessings, threatenings, and curses of God. When this book by spiritual light is found, and on reading, or hearing thereof, conviction reaches the conscience, it is a great instance of God's favour, a token for good, and must be faithfully acknowledged as such. Reader, art thou truly apprehensive of the weight of God's wrath, and solicitous to obtain his favour? Seek then earnestly upon thy knees, and in the house of the LORD, redemption from the curses of the law; pray that JESUS may be revealed to thee; the blood of that Lamb of God alone can take away the guilt of sin; having found the law, rest not till thou find the gospel also, and arrive at a comfortable assurance of thine interest in its blessings. Josiah's heart was tender, he wept, and was encouraged; follow his sorrow, and thou wilt partake of his blessings: and make the law of God thy delight and counsellor.

13 SEPT.

(256)

DR *A*W me, we will run after thee: The king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. In thee, the fatherless findeth mercy,
SONG i. 4. HOSEA xiv. 3.

THE needle's point in the seaman's compass never stands still, but quivers and shakes till it come right against the north-pole: The wise-men of the east never rested till they were right against the star which appeared unto them; and the star itself never stood still till it came right against that other STAR, which shone more brightly in the manger, than the sun did in the firmament: And Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot; all the while she was fluttering over the flood, till she returned to the ark with an olive-branch in her mouth: So the heart of every true christian, which is the turtle-dove of Jesus CHRIST, can find no rest all the while she is hovering over the waters of this world, till it have the silver wings of a dove, and with the olive-branch of faith, flies to the true Noah, which signifieth rest, till CHRIST puts forth his hand out of the ark, and taking it in, receiveth it to himself.

14 SEPT.

(257)

WHAT think ye of CHRIST? MATT. xxii. 42.

AND ought we not to put this question to our souls, when our happiness for ever depends upon him; and when without him we are undone to eternity? How ought we then to think of the Lord JESUS CHRIST? Surely as the scripture represents him to be, "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." We ought to think of him in his person, as the great God incarnate; in his work and his offices, as the Saviour of Israel: We ought to think of him as one, in whom justice is satisfied, love and righteousness manifested, and sinners are saved. O what have God's people ever thought of CHRIST JESUS? And what do the saints now in heaven think of him? But what think we of CHRIST? when burdened with sin; when oppressed with affliction. When we cannot entertain a good thought of ourselves, can we then think of CHRIST as highly as heretofore? Alas! how very weak is our faith at the best! LORD, strengthen our faith, inflame our love, enlarge our views, support us in trials, guide us by thy counsels, and receive us into glory, that we may sing thy praise to all eternity. Amen.

15 SEPT.

(258)

OUR conversation, or our citizenship, is in heaven, PHIL. iii. 20. therefore rejoice, because your names are written in heaven, LUKE x. 20. And set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, COL. iii. 2.

A CHRISTIAN being only a traveller through this world, having as it were a night's-lodging in it, does not expect to have every thing so convenient; but since his journey's end and city is in heaven, all his actions, sufferings, prayers, trade and conversation, turn that way. **O** LORD, grant that mine eyes may be always fixed upon this mark, so as to regulate all my designs and doings accordingly: asking myself in every thing, whether it be fit for heaven, and agreeable to the mind and manners of the celestial citizens and bridegroom above?

Raise thee, my soul, fly up and run
Thro' ev'ry heav'nly street;
And say, There's naught below the sun
That's worthy of thy feet.

Thus will we mount on sacred wings,
And tread the courts above;
Nor earth, nor all her mightiest things,
Shall tempt our meanest love,

The glorious tenants of the place
Stand bending round the throne;
And saints and seraphs sing and praise
The infinite THREE-ONE.

JESUS, O when shall that dear day,
That joyful hour appear,
When I shall leave this house of clay,
To dwell amongst them there?

16 SEPT.

(259)

TO Him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins, ACTS x. 43. chap. iv. 12. This name is as ointment poured forth, the fulness of all grace, CANT. i. 3. It is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it. and is safe, PROV. xviii. 10.

IN this name we shall draw nigh to the Father in prayer, and not come before him with a strange fire of our own worthiness or devotion; and he will draw nigh to us again, JAMES iv. 8. He will certainly grant our petitions, "and we shall receive, that our joy may be full," JOHN xvi. 24. "For the LORD is good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him," PSALM lxxxvi. 5. and all these promises are yea and amen in CHRIST; that every one can say, "The LORD will receive my prayer," PSALM vi. 9. "Blessed be GOD, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me;" for "he has dealt bountifully with me," PSALM lxxvi. 20. and xlii. 6.

Lift up your eyes to th' heav'nly seat,
Where your Redeemer stays:
Kind intercessor! there He sits
And loves, and pleads, and prays.
Petitions now, and praise may rise,
And saints their off'rings bring;

The priest with his own sacrifice
Presents them to the king.

JESUS alone shall bear my cries
Up to the Father's throne:
He, dearest LORD! perfumes my sighs,
And sweetens ev'ry groan.

17 SEPT.

(260)

*I*N thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore, PSALM xvi. 11. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, REV. xxi. 2, 3, 4, 10, 12.

O MY dear Saviour! being still so very imperfect and little prepared for heaven, grant that I may be more adorned with faith and love, with a heavenly mind and spiritual desires. And since thou knowest in what I am wanting, and hast justified and clothed me already with thy own garment and blood, and hast brought so many sons to glory; I trust, that thou wilt also inwardly adorn, perfect, and fetch me home in due time.

O, the delights, the heav'nly joys
The glories of the place,
Where JESUS sends the brightest beams
Of his o'erslowing grace!

Archangels sound his lofty praise
Thro' ev'ry heav'nly street;
And lay their highest honours down
Submissive at his feet,

LORD, how our souls are all on fire
To see thy bless'd abode;
Our tongues rejoice in tunes of praise
To our incarnate GOD.

And while our faith enjoys this sight,
We long to leave our clay;
And wish thy fiery chariots, LORD,
To fetch our souls away,

18 SEPT.

(261)

WATCH and pray: let us be going, MATT. xxvi. 41, 46. Remember Lot's wife, LUKE xvii. 32. This is the way, walk ye in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left, ISA. xxx. 21.

To keep free from self-righteousness and false joy and liberty, is the safest way. O my dear Saviour! thou art my way; I walk in thy name, I live in faith, I look upon thee, I cleave to thee, I abide in thee; and my constant saying is, I am justified, clean, and free by thee; not to live licentiously, but to be kept from it. For if I was not to rest in thee, I should rest in the flesh; but being taken up with thee, all other things must vanish away, and I am able to be watchful, close and fervent.

When my forgetful soul renews
The savour of thy grace;
My heart presumes I cannot lose
The relish all my days.

But ere some fleeting hour is pass'd,
The flatt'ring world employs
Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
And to pollute my joys.

Then I repent, and vex my soul,
That I should leave thee so;
Where will those wild affections roll,
That let a Saviour go?

Shew my forgetful feet the way
That leads to joys on high;
There knowledge grows without decay,
And love shall never die.

19 SEPT.

(262)

WALK before me, as in my presence, and be thou perfect, GEN. xvii. 1. Fear GOD, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, ECCLES. xii. 13, 14.

CONSEQUENTLY all such things as are now called indifferent in their nature, will also be arraigned, and not judged indifferent, but either actually good or actually evil. O the prodigious harm that is done by this false doctrine of innocent things? It opens the door to innumerable sins. For though our conscience often tells us, that we should not do such things as are not actually good; yet presently innocence is pleaded, it is called a harmless thing; which, though it could not be said to be good, yet it was not evil neither, but quite indifferent in its nature: by which thousands are drawn into the snares of the devil. O LORD, grant that all my works be done unto thee, and in thy presence, agreeable to thy commandments; that even my leaves may not wither, and whatsoever I do may prosper and abide for ever.

Within thy circling pow'r I stand;
On ev'ry side I find thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with GOD.

O may these thoughts possess my breast,
Where'er I rove, where'er I rest;
Nor let my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin, for GOD is there.

20 SEPT.

(263)

VERILY, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, JOHN iii. 3.

CONSEQUENTLY no outward form of religion will do; but we must be spiritually born by the Spirit of God, and have our hearts changed, else we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. CHRIST confirmed it twice with an oath. How is it possible then, that mere honest and moral men can be saved? Will CHRIST break his double oath? No surely. Therefore outward gross immoralities being only blamed and rebuked, moral christians always slip through; and the looser sort think, that they can leave off their open sins one time or another; and so none is duly concerned to be thoroughly converted; but the new birth and a real change of the heart, being insisted upon, and CHRIST held forth in this only true way, every one, who will be saved, must be turned.

The second Adam shall restore
The ruins of the first;
Hosanna to that sov'reign pow'r
That new creates our dust.

When from the curse He sets us free,
He makes our natures clean.

Nor would our Saviour come to be
The minister of sin.

His Spirit purifies our frame,
And seals our peace with God;
JESUS and his salvation came
By water and by blood.

WHY art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in GOD, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my GOD, PSALM xlii. 2, 5, 6. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, ROM. viii. 18.

THIS shews, that even believers are still in disquietness, but they conquer it by faith and hope to the end. If the LORD had said, that they should strive, pray and hope, till such and such a time; and his help should fail, then they might despair; but as he fixes no certain time, but without limitation requires them to hope; this keeps them from impatience and despair; should he even tarry to the end, they will certainly experience him then, if no sooner, to be faithful in his promises. O LORD, suffer not the load to lie too long nor too heavy upon me, that I may not be unfaithful: I trust thou wilt in due time prove thyself to be my help, and thy word to be true.

'Tis GOD that lifts our comforts high,
Or sinks them in the grave;
He gives (and blessed be his name!)
He takes but what he gave.
Peace, all our angry passions then;
Let each rebellious sigh

Be silent at his sov'reign will,
And ev'ry murmur die.
If smiling mercy crown our lives,
Its praises shall be spread;
And we'll adore the justice too,
That strikes our comforts dead,

BE not soon shaken in mind, 2 THESS. ii. 2. I determined not to know any thing among you, save JESUS CHRIST and him crucified, 1 COR. ii. 2. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, COL. ii. 3.

O MY dear Saviour, grant that I may rest quietly and humbly in thee, avoiding all swerving presumptions, and actions which are not commanded to me. He that always covets novelties, it is a sign that he has not as yet tasted the power of the good word of God; else he would certainly be satisfied with it. Better daily to improve in the power of godliness, than in new words, forms and methods. "May the LORD quicken me by the old truths, and humble my heart evermore, so as to receive them better, and to abide in that which I have heard from the beginning!" Novelty is the bane of souls, by which we are often grievously tormented and distracted. It is work enough for a meek and quiet soul to keep within the bounds of a settled mind, and effectually to center in God. How is it possible for such, as from a vain curiosity desire to know every thing, to enjoy true rest? What have we to do with the world? What need to meddle with the business of others? What signifies all knowledge, if it does not profit our souls? Had we not better to be ignorant of some other things, than to want a saving knowledge of CHRIST?

O that the LORD would guide my ways
To keep his statutes still;
O that my GOD would grant me grace
To know and do his will.

My soul has gone too far astray,
My feet too often slip;
Yet since I've not forgot thy way,
Restore thy wand'ring sheep.

23 SEPT.

(266)

WASH me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,
PSALM li. 2.—Divine answer; *The blood of JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, cleanseth us from all sin,* 1 JOHN i. 16.

UNDER the ceremonial law all things were purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there was no remission; thus it is impossible, that any one sin, even the least sinful motion, should be taken away, except by the blood of CHRIST JESUS. This teaches us the heinousness of sin, keeps us humble, tender and watchful, and yet gives sufficient peace and strength at the same time.

My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,
And cleanse, and keep me clean.

Wash me, and make me thus thy own:
Wash me, and mine thou art;
Wash me, but not my feet alone,
My hands, my head, my heart.

Th' atonement of thy blood apply,
Till faith to sight improve;
Till hope shall in fruition die,
And all my soul be love.

For ever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding side;
'Tis all my hope and all my plea,
"For me the Saviour dy'd."

EXAMINE yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, 2 COR. xiii. 5.

BUT is there any need of such self-examination, when yet we preach CHRIST, and stay ourselves on his name? Alas! it is possible both to preach and profess him, to be confident respecting him, as our Rock and Redeemer, whilst still we remain without interest in him, and are yet in the way to everlasting destruction. Thus JESUS hath told us, MATT. vii. 22, 23. Let us examine ourselves; Is our faith in Him accompanied with much self-abhorrence, in the views of our sinfulness and pollution before him? Do we prize him, not only for his favour to us, but for his own goodness, his grace and his excellence? Do we love him, so as we love nothing beside, not self, not the world, not ease or advantage? Then surely we are his, and He also is ours: These graces are the fruits of his Spirit within us; they are proofs of our faith, and of our union with him: and if we are united by the Spirit of JESUS, he will certainly own us before men and angels; he will never forsake us in time or eternity. But how dreadful will their case be who deceive themselves here; and habitually give themselves unto sin and iniquity, whilst yet they make mention of JESUS CHRIST with their lips? Keep us, LORD, we beseech thee, from such sad delusion! O give us to remember our past provocations; and to know, to love, and to serve thee in sincerity.

25 SEPT.

(268)

WHAT lack I yet ? MATT. xix. 20. *Yet lackest thou one thing,* LUKE xviii. 22. *For, one thing is needful,* LUKE x. 42.

THIS one thing needful is to have CHRIST ; and by being first, with Mary, served and treated by him, we draw the necessary strength from him, to serve him again. He must be first our meat, before we can feed on him, or do any thing for him. Faith receives grace first from the fulness of CHRIST ; and being thus strengthened, begins to give and work also, though it be but faintly. However, it is not by our working and giving, but by the receiving in faith, that we become christians, and remain in a perfect state of salvation : since we receive, even with the feeble hands of faith, a whole and perfect CHRIST. “ This is the one thing needful.”

I'll hear of nothing else beside
My JESU, and him crucify'd ;

In him is all I want :

His blood, his meritorious blood,
Alone is rich, alone is good,

For that alone I pant.

Sure none refuse to join this song,
To praise our Saviour all along

Their pilgrimage below ;

To sing, “ There's none, there's none beside,

“ But JESU, and him crucify'd,

“ Needful for us to know.”

26 SEPT.

(269)

JOSEPH is a fruitful bough—the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty GOD of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, GEN. xlix. 22—24.

JOSEPH is acknowledged to have been an eminent type of the Messiah: by bringing some circumstances under one view, the resemblance will appear conspicuous, and striking. JOSEPH was the son of his father's old age; CHRIST the Son of the Ancient of days. JOSEPH was in a peculiar manner beloved by his father; CHRIST is the dear Son of his Father's love. Jacob made for Joseph a coat of many colours; GOD prepared a body in human nature for CHRIST, filled and adorned with the various gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure. JOSEPH was hated by his brethren, and they could not endure to think he should have the dominion over them; the Jews, CHRIST's brethren according to the flesh, hated him, and would not have him to reign over them. JOSEPH was sent by his father a long journey, to visit his brethren, and know their welfare; CHRIST was sent from the bosom of the Father, to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. JOSEPH's brethren conspired to take away his life; the Jews said, "This is the heir, let us kill him;" and they consulted to take away his life. JOSEPH was sold for twenty pieces of silver at the motion of Judah; and CHRIST, by one of the same name, was sold for thirty pieces. JOSEPH was delivered to strangers, and CHRIST to the gentiles. JOSEPH being reckoned as dead by his father, and yet alive, may be an emblem of CHRIST's death, and resurrection from the dead.

27 SEPT.

(270)

WHAT things were gain to me, those I counted loss for CHRIST; yea double loss, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win CHRIST, and be found in him, as my righteousness, PHIL. iii 7—9.

THIS was the life and constant mind of St Paul. The words, "In
" Him, in CHRIST, in the LORD, I am in CHRIST, &c." occur continually. I choose it for my motto also. It shall be my great tower, my strong fortress, my sweet paradise, mine only element and life. Here I will take up my abode for ever: "It is good for us to be
" here; here let us make tabernacles." Here death shall find me at last.

Had I ten thousand gifts beside,
I'd cleave to JESU crucify'd,
And build on him alone:
For no foundation is there giv'n
On which I'd place my hopes of heav'n,
But CHRIST the corner stone,

Possessing CHRIST, I all possess;
Wisdom, and strength, and righteousness,
And sanctity complete:
Bold in his name, I dare draw nigh
Before the Ruler of the sky,
And all his justice meet.

WHAT must I do to be saved?—Divine answer; Believe on the LORD JESUS, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house, ACTS xvi. 31.

FAITH is not a confidence of our own making, but it is God that works it in a contrite and repenting heart. This faith purifies the heart, destroys the old Adam, overcomes the world, changes us in heart, mind, and all the powers and faculties of the soul; which is the true protestant faith; and not that we only think and say, "I believe." By this we must try our faith. All true believers have received it under a sense of holy contrition and sorrow. If we feel something of this, and apply to CHRIST by prayer for faith and grace, we have a sure mark of faith already; for if we did not believe, we would not pray. And he that daily cleanses himself in the blood of CHRIST, has true faith and hope already, though he is but weak, and does not taste any joy.

Ye dying souls that sit
In darkness and distress,
Look from the borders of the pit
To CHRIST's recov'ring grace.
Sinners shall hear his sound;
Their thankful tongues shall own,

Their righteousness and strength is found
In CHRIST the LORD alone.

In him shall Israel trust,
And see their guilt forgiv'n;
God will pronounce the sinners just,
And take the saints to heav'n.

29 SEPT.

(272)

ABSTAIN from all appearance of evil, that ye may be blameless and harmless; the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, PHIL. ii. 15.

LORD, I desire to shine in good works, the genuine fruits of faith: therefore will I give myself up to thee to purge me, that I may bring forth more fruit. Looking upon myself as thine, I would not only abstain from evil, but from the very appearance of it. Some content themselves with being blameless, but I would wish to appear so for the gospel's sake, lest through me offence should come; which, as far as in me lieth, I would prevent. Thy children, O God, are as lights in the world; O! pour thy grace, that heavenly oil, into my lamp, and so trim it that it may give light unto all around, that they may be led to glorify thy holy name.

O LORD! my stubborn will subdue;
Create my ruin'd frame anew;
Dispel my darkness by thy light:
Into all truth my spirit guide,
But from mine eyes for ever hide
All things displeasing in thy sight.

Be heaven now my soul's abode,
Hid be my life with CHRIST in God.
My spirit, LORD, be one with thine;
Let all my works in thee be wrought,
And fill'd with thee, be all my thought,
Till in me thy full likeness shine.

30 SEPT.

(273)

LET him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, REV. xxii. 17.

If there be a sense of sin, and want of spiritual blessings, and a willingness to be saved by grace, though you know not that it is CHRIST's secret power that makes you willing, yet being athirst and willing, you are invited: do not puzzle and perplex yourself with such questions as these; Am I elected? Have I a right? Am I prepared? But come upon the invitation, and take pardon, peace, righteousness, &c. as free gifts to the needy. If one ready to perish with hunger and thirst, was invited to a feast, and assured of welcome; and he should stand hesitating, Have I a right? Am I worthy? Would it not seem preposterous in him thus to demur, when his necessities were pressing upon him, and a plentiful table before him? The weary, the hungry, the thirsty, the guilty, the worthless, the vilest, are invited to believe on JESUS; who came only to save sinners; and hath assured them in his word, that they who thus come to him, "he will in no wise cast out."

The Spirit in the word,
And in his motions cries,
"Come to the fountain-head of life,
And come for large supplies.

Let him who feels his thirst,
Nor can endure its rage,
Come to salvation's copious springs,
And all his pains assuage.

And whosoever will,
Is welcome to receive
The streams of everlasting life,
That heav'n will freely give."

JESUS! is this thy voice?
We bless the gracious call;
And fly with joyful haste to thee,
Our Saviour, and our All.

T

WEE P not : behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed, REV. v. 5. He rose triumphantly, and destroyed the works of the devil : therefore sin shall not have dominion over us, ROM. vi. 14.

MANY complain, that though they will not turn back, yet they have no power to advance further. If this is thy case, my reader, remember that the enemy of souls will discourage thee. Go on praying, and venture it evermore upon the LORD. Consider how he awakened you at first, how often he has heard your prayers afterwards, and assisted you in many hard struggles. Surely he will help you now also ! If that will not do, begin, as it were afresh, acknowledge yourself guilty in every respect ; and, as the chief of sinners, plead for mercy, and be instant in your humble supplications ; looking at the same time upon yourselves as reconciled and pardoned in CHRIST, in spite of all your misery : then you will soon make a better progress. To despair of our own strength, is good ; but we must never despair of the power of CHRIST, who is risen from the dead, but be sure to overcome with him at last. He will certainly help you in the due and best season.

Hell and thy sins resist thy course,
But hell and sin are vanquish'd foes ;
Thy Jesu's nail'd them to the cross,
And sung the triumph when he rose.

He dies, and in that dreadful night
Did all the pow'rs of hell destroy ;
Rising he brought our heav'n to light,
And took possession of the joy.

WHOM the LORD loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But he chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness, HEB. xii. 6—10.

To these chastenings also belong outward afflictions, which are precious means, and sanctified to believers. O my dear heavenly Father! thou art only pleased with a true filial confidence, but I am still of a distrusting heart, when any thing comes upon me on a sudden. Grant that I may always entertain the best hopes of thee, fear no adversity, nor look upon it as a sign of displeasure, but of love; really believing it to be intended as a blessing to my good. Whatever thy providence may order, let me only be convinced of thy paternal affection, and fall in with thy salutary designs.

So for my sin I justly feel
Thy discipline, O GOD;
Yet wait the gracious moment still,
Till thou remove thy rod.
For I have found, 'tis good for me
To bear my Father's rod;

Afflictions make me learn thy law,
And live upon my GOD.
This is the comfort I enjoy
When new distress begins;
I read thy word, I run thy way,
And hate my former sins,

3 OCT.

(276)

THE entrance of thy word gives light : It giveth understanding to the simple,
PSALM CXIX. 130. Order my steps in thy word : and let not any iniquity
have dominion over me, ver. 33.

WE may have a clear sight and a real taste of the gospel, and yet be soon deprived of the comfort of it again, if we do not walk in godly simplicity and poverty of spirit, for CHRIST will have none but humble and child-like disciples. But thus abiding always in the word and in CHRIST, we shall come to great and lasting assurance : for neither a sweet sense, nor even faith itself, but CHRIST alone, is the foundation of our salvation, whom the weakest as well as the strongest believer receives. And we must believe first, before we can feel. To trust only on feeling, is not true faith, and does not last long.

Thy mercies fill the earth, O LORD ;
How good thy works appear !
Open mine eyes to read thy word,
And see thy wonders there.

When once it enters to the mind,
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instruction find,
And raise their thoughts to God.

'Tis like the sun, a heav'nly light,
That guides us all the day ;
And through the dangers of the night,
A lamp to lead our way.

Since I'm a stranger here below,
Let not thy path be hid,
But mark the road my feet shou'd go,
And be my constant guide.

4 OCT.

(277)

TURN away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way, PSALM CXIX. 37.

If you was to see a man dully endeavouring all his life to satisfy his thirst by holding up one and the same empty cup to his mouth, you would certainly despise his ignorance; but if you should see others of brighter parts, and finer understandings, ridiculing the dull satisfaction of one cup, and thinking to satisfy their own thirst by a variety of gilt and golden empty cups, would you think that these were ever the wiser, or happier, or better employed, for their finer parts? Now this is all the difference that you can see in the happiness of this life. The dull and heavy soul, may be content with one empty appearance of happiness, and be continually trying to hold one and the same empty cup to his mouth all his life. But then let the wit, the great scholar, the fine genius, the great statesman, the polite gentleman, lay all their heads together, and they can only shew you more, and various, empty appearances of happiness; give them all the world into their hands, let them cut and carve as they please, they can only make a greater variety of empty cups; for search as deep, and look as far as you will, there is nothing here to be found, that is nobler or greater than high eating and drinking; than rich dress, and human applause; unless you look for it in the wisdom and laws of religion. Reader, if you will reflect upon the vanity of all orders of life without piety, and see how all the ways of the world, are only so many different ways of error, blindness and mistake; you would soon turn from the creature, and seek for happiness in the Creator.

5 OCT.

(278)

GIVE ear to my prayer, O GOD, and hide not thyself from my supplication, PSALM lv. 1.—CHRIST'S answer; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you, JOHN xvii. 23. For the Father himself loveth you, ver. 27. He has promised: Before they call, I will answer; and whilst they are speaking, I will hear, ISA. lxxv. 24. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever you desire when ye pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them, MARK xi. 24.*

HE that converses much, and is humbly confident with GOD in prayer. shall certainly be heard: and these answers of prayer are undeniable evidences of the truth, faithfulness and love of GOD, and greatly strengthen his faith; and at last bring him to be intimately acquainted with Him. The more we receive, the more we are enlightened to see how much there is still wanting. This stirs us up to more frequent prayer, and to desire evermore; and the more we desire, and believe that we shall receive it, the more shall be granted. Unbelief receives nothing, MATT. xiii. 58. but faith opens all the treasures of GOD, and never goes away empty.

Because on me they set their love,
I'll save them, faith the LORD;
I'll bear their joyful souls above
Destruction and the sword.

My grace shall answer when they call;
In trouble I'll be nigh;
My pow'r shall help them when they fall,
And raise them when they die.

6 OCT.

(279)

IF I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of CHRIST, GAL. i. 10.
Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, ROM. xv. 2.
Fear or love of men, and hypocrisy, very often are nearly allied :
A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet, PROV. xxix. 5.
But he that rebukes a man afterwards, shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue, chap. xxviii. 23.

WE are ever inclined to extremes, even then when GOD has begun his work in our soul. At one time we are apt to run into a false activity for the conversion of others, trusting too much on our own sufficiency and strength; at other times perhaps we fall into too much remissness and inactivity for the salvation of others. May the LORD therefore always guide me to steer the middle course, so as to walk in all singleness and humility of heart, as well as in true fervency of spirit, faith and love; that it may be said, "I believe, therefore do I speak." Grant, O my dear Saviour, that I may shine as a light, and be useful to all about me; never seeking MY OWN, but only the salvation and good of others, with unfeigned love. O that thy love may constrain me in all things! Amen.

My own glory still I seek,
Still I covet human praise;
Still in all I do, or speak,
Thine I wrong, and rob thy grace:
And must that which is so good
Evil prove to sinful me?

Poison shall I draw from food,
Sin from grace, and pride from thee?
O forbid it, humble love!
Hide me, O my Father, hide;
Far away this snare remove,
Save me from the sin of pride.

7 OCT.

(280)

HEREBY *we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him,* 1 JOHN iii. 19.

THE evidence of our assurance of eternal happiness, is that, which every soul that makes any serious reflections in matters of religion, parts after: it is therefore necessary to know upon what foundation this blessed evidence is built, and from what principles it arises; and those, I think, are chiefly faith, love and obedience; since no man can have this, that does not feel in himself the principle of obedience; nor can he have obedience without the principle of love, nor love without the principle of faith: for it is a notorious contradiction to imagine, that any one can be assured of God Almighty's pardon, without obeying him; of his favour, without loving him; or of the eternal enjoyment of him, without a firm and stedfast belief in him. But here many mistake the nature of these things; true belief in God represents him to the mind infinite in glory, in power, wisdom, in goodness, and in all perfections, with such charms, such beauty, such loveliness; as to captivate and ravish the affections of the soul, and smite it with a divine love; true love reigns triumphant in the soul, engrosses all its affections, divests other objects of their charms, nay, makes them appear vile and contemptible in comparison with the supreme good: true obedience strives to please God, to resemble him, to render itself acceptable to him, and ardently desires the enjoyment of him.

8 OCT.

(281)

HE that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved, MATT. xxiv. 13.

Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown, REV. iii. 11 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall, 1 COR. x. 12.

HE that stands in faith, and by nature is of a chearful temper. must not magnify the measure of his own faith, and undervalue that of weaker souls, for fear of falling away. He who knows the nature and power of temptations, will not discourage the weak, nor insist too much upon particular enjoyments and sensible assurance, which are not the constant witness and marks of faith. The holy Spirit himself is the earnest and seal of adoption; who is to be known, not only by this joy, but by all his other fruits and operations. To trust too much upon feeling, disturbs our peace as soon as it is gone : but to rely to the word of God, preserves a settled assurance.

JESU, shall I never be
Firmly grounded upon thee ?
Strong in faith I seem this hour,
Stript the next of all my pow'r.

Plant and root and fix in me
All the mind that was in thee :

Settled peace I then shall find,
When I am renew'd in mind.

Grant that ev'ry moment I
May believe and feel thee nigh ;
Stedfastly behold thy face,
'Stablish'd with abiding grace.

9. OCT.

(282)

IF any man have not the spirit of CHRIST, (but the spirit of this world) he is none of his, ROM. viii. 9. See also ver. 7, 8, 14.

FOR not only gross wickedness, but even a carnal mind, and "the friendship of this world, is enmity against GOD," PHIL. iii. 18, 19. JAMES iv. 4. But how do I know that I have the Spirit of CHRIST? Answer, I have prayed for him earnestly; this cannot be in vain, LUKE xi. 13. He works also hatred and sorrow of sin, rebukes, comforts, and drives me to CHRIST, and to prayer. This is his abiding witness, built upon the word of GOD, which no man of this world, but even the weakest believer, can have.

Holy, and true, and righteous LORD,
I wait to prove thy perfect will;
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal.

The hatred of the carnal mind
Out of my flesh at once remove;
Give me a tender heart, resign'd,
And pure, and full of faith and love.

Within me thy good Spirit place;
Spirit of health, and love, and pow'r:
Plant in me thy victorious grace,
And sin shall never enter more.

Purge me from ev'ry sinful blot,
My idols all be cast aside;
Cleanse me from ev'ry evil thought,
From all the filth of self and pride.

10 OCT.

(283)

Whoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.
MATT. xiii. 12. For, the water that I shall give him, shall be in him
a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, JOHN iv. 14.

OF the remarkable increase of the kingdom of God, even from the least beginning, see also MATT. xiii. 31—33, and that beautiful figure, EZEK. xlvii. 1—12. This well therefore being once opened to you, it is highly necessary to draw evermore the living water out of it by prayer, since it runs freely then. But if you begin to be slothful, and distracted, not abiding closely in CHRIST, by true watchfulness, as in the presence of God, your spirit will be soon dried up; that afterwards you will hardly be able with the most anxious groans to draw as it were one single drop out of the deep of this fountain. O LORD! grant that I may uninterruptedly remain in thee and in thy presence, and always live in thy communion, as the fish in the water.

Glory to God that walks the sky,
And sends his blessing thro':
That tells his saints of joys on high,
And gives a taste below.

Chearful I feast on heav'nly fruit,
And drink the pleasures down,
Pleasures that flow hard by the foot
Of the eternal throne.

But ah! how soon my joys decay,
How soon my sins arise,
And snatch th' heav'nly scene away
From these lamenting eyes!

When shall the time, 'dear JESUS, when
The shining day appear,
That I shall leave these clouds of sin
And guilt and darkness here?

11 OCT.

(284)

CAST ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, MATT. XXV. 30.

Look at this man, to whom his lord had given one talent: he could not bear the thoughts of using his talent according to the will of him from whom he had it, and therefore he chose to make himself happier in a way of his own. "Lord, said he, I knew thee, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering where thou hadst not sowed," &c. His lord having convicted him out of his own mouth, dispatched him with this sentence, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness," &c. Here you see how happy this man made himself, by not acting wholly according to his lord's will. It was, according to his own account, a happiness of murmuring and discontent; "I knew thee, says he, that thou wast a hard man;" it was a happiness of fears and apprehensions; "I was, says he, afraid;" it was a happiness of vain labours and fruitless travels; "I went, said he, and hid thy talent;" and after having been awhile the sport of foolish passions, tormenting fears, and fruitless labours, he is rewarded with darkness, eternal weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Look at the man with his five talents, "Lord thou gavest me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more," &c. Here you see a man wholly intent on improving his talents; he has no uneasy passions, murmurings, vain fears, and fruitless labours, like the other, but his work prospers in his hand, his happiness increases upon him, the blessing of five becomes the blessing of ten talents; and he is received with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

12 OCT.

(285)

THROUGH (vain) desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom, **PROV. xviii. 1.** But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, &c. **GAL. v. 22, 23.**

BAWLING, judging and reviling, does not become a christian. The **LORD** was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in "a still small voice," **1 KINGS xix. 11, 12.** He that takes offence at every thing, is still blind; and who can bear nothing, is but very weak. Such should remember that it is said, "Destroy it not," &c. **ISA. lxv. 8.** Not only the grosser sort of divisions, but also such well-meaning particular separations and alterations, as are imprudently made at improper times and places, do a great deal of harm, and disturb the general harmony and mutual confidence of christian brethren. For some religious exercises are good in themselves, but brotherly love and harmony is better still. The true Spirit of God is no sectarian, makes no divisions, is far from boasting, and uses no arts or cunning tricks. Thus you may try the spirits.

Lo! what an entertaining sight
Are brethren that agree,
Brethren whose chearful hearts unite
In bands of piety!

When streams of love from **CHRIST** the spring
Descend to ev'ry soul,
And heav'nly peace, with balmy wing,
Shades and bedews the whole.

13 OCT.

(286)

B*Y this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another,*
JOHN xiii. 35.

“GOD is love, and every one that loveth is born of GOD;” if we love one another as disciples, and brethren of CHRIST, all saints as saints, not as of this or that party; and love not in word, but in deed and in truth; and shew our love sincerely and heartily by all proper means, in the work and labour of love, this is to ourselves, and to all men, a proper, solid proof of discipleship; a clear testimony, that we have truly learned CHRIST, have his Spirit and his love shed abroad in our hearts; that we are of the family and household of faith, and shall enjoy all the family privileges. This is a better evidence, and more convincing to all around us what we are, than all knowledge, gifts, attainments and outward privileges whatever. O GOD of love, cause me to love thee, and all thine, the poor, the weak, and the feeble, as well as the strong; for all are thine.

Let party-names no more
The christian world o’erspread;
Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,
Are one in CHRIST their Head.

Among the saints on earth
Let mutual love be found;
Heirs of the same inheritance,
With mutual blessings crown’d,

Let envy and ill-will
Be banish’d far away;
Those shou’d in strictest friendship dwell,
Who the same LORD obey.

Then will the Church below
Resemble that above;
Where streams of pleasure overflow,
And ev’ry heart is love.

14 OCT.

(287)

WATCH therefore, for ye know not what hour your LORD doth come,
MATT. xxiv. 42.

To watch, is the wise exercise of a gracious soul, who is sensible of his own weakness, loves his Saviour, and fears to grieve his Spirit; who is well acquainted with the depth of corruption in his fallen nature; sees with mental eyes, the invisible powers of darkness, and hearkens to the voice of his benevolent, watchful, adorable Shepherd. It implies a thorough awakened attention of the mind to its spiritual concerns; has the love of JESUS for its motive. and is attended with a fiducial dependence on CHRIST the LORD for protection from, and strength against all his enemies, together with supplies of grace in every time of need.—If our religion be only in outward profession, it may pass without watching; but if it is true grace in the heart from JESUS CHRIST, that sacred treasure will need to be guarded by circumspect watchfulness —The exhortation is to all God's children, necessary in every condition, in every stage of a christian's life; in youth, manhood, old age; in prosperity and adversity; in the seasons of consolation, and in the times of temptation; in company, and alone.

O blessed JESUS, help me to watch and pray; let me be always ready; keep me in thy love, and preserve me by thy power, till my change shall come.

15 OCT.

(288)

*AS the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee,
O GOD. My soul thirsteth for GOD, for the living GOD, PSAL. xlii. 2,
3.—Divine answer; Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and
he that has no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk with-
out money and without price. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which
is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness, ISA. lv. 1, 2.*

THERE is a great difference between a legal and a faint-hearted soul; the former is puffed up with self righteousness; the latter humbly thirsts after CHRIST'S righteousness; therefore he is not under the law, but has grace already. It is only the child, or the new man actually born, that can cry and thirst. And though he cannot so fully believe it, yet to have grace, is one thing, and to feel and enjoy it, is another. Therefore let not the weak be confounded, which is done very easily, the enemy himself contributing to it, as much as he can; but let it be declared, even to the weakest, that they are actually saved, as soon as they are earnestly panting and willing to receive all without price, MATT. v. 3.

Eternal wisdom has prepar'd
A soul-reviving feast,
And bid our longing appetites
The rich provisions taste.

JESUS, the GOD, invites us here
To this triumphal feast,

And brings immortal blessings down
For each redeemed guest.

O! glorious GOD, what can we pay
For favours so divine?
We would devote our hearts away,
To be for ever thine.

16 OCT.

(289)

HOW long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? PSALM xiii. 2.—GOD's answer; Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto GOD, PHIL. iv. 6. Commit thy way unto the LORD: trust also in him, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved, PSALM lv. 22. For he has done wonderful things; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, ISA. xxv. 1, 9.

"Be careful for nothing," is a wall against a thousand troubles. But if we give room to any care and unbelief; it is like a leaven that spreads through all our actions. Therefore we ought never to despair in our lawful calling, but rely in all things on the good providence and faithfulness of God; firmly believing, that he will never fail to carry us through the most difficult and intricate circumstances, though there should be ever so little appearance for it in our own eyes.

He that can dash whole worlds to death,
And make them when he please,
He speaks, and that almighty breath,
Fulfills his great decrees.

His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;

The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.

He said, "Let the wide heav'n be spread;"
And heav'n was stretch'd abroad:
"Abram, I'll be thy God," he said;
And he was Abram's God.

U

17 OCT.

(290)

— *IT is done*, REV. xxi. 9.

WHEN JESUS bowed the head, and gave up the ghost, he said, *It is finished*.—The arduous and important work of obedience and suffering, which I had undertaken in my mediatorial capacity, is finished.—I have glorified my Father on earth; I have finished the work he gave me to do.

When all the redeemed are gathered, he who sitteth on the throne, beholding those he had purchased by his blood, and brought to glory, rejoicing in these works of his hands, thus expresseth himself, *It is done*. The means and helps appointed for training you up, and preparing you for glory, are now superseded, being no longer necessary: The scaffolding is now taken down, when the grand and glorious edifice in all its parts is finished. That “which is perfect is come, and that which was in part is done away.” What depth of wisdom; what beautiful disposition in the arrangement of the various preparatory parts of the plan, agreeable to the eternal counsel of peace, and in the tendency of every one of them to perfect the glorious work of redeeming love! How harmoniously connected all the links of the golden chain! ROM. viii. 29, 30.

“This is the doing of the LORD, and is it not marvellous in my eye?” When receiving the Spirit that is of God, I see the things that are freely given of God, do I not see and admire my dear IMMANUEL in the whole of the plan; in him the beginning and consummation of this grand design? Am I a part of the plan? Is not his eye upon me, his hand about me? O amazing wisdom and love! shall no part be neglected, can nothing fail in the Redeemer’s hand, shall even the weakest be supported, shall none be lost; shall all his have eternal life? Why then should I fear? The mighty One will do all his works in me and for me. Is the prospect by faith of this finished work pleasant and transporting, what must the immediate beatific vision be! O my God, I will live in hopes of one day joining with all the redeemed in the song of Moses and the Lamb: keep me by thy power to everlasting salvation. Amen.

18 OCT.

(291)

WE must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, ACTS
xiv. 22. *I therefore, let us run with patience the race that is set before*
us, HEB. xii. 1. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, ver. 4.

How is it possible for any man to deny the strivings against sin? For (1.) here we are plainly told. (2.) What is spoke of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, GAL. v. 17. is the very same. (3.) The most experienced christians are witnesses to it. (4.) The word of God is said to be a sword, our prayers a wrestling, and our faith the victory. Thus our whole race consists in strivings and conquests. There is always an enemy to be conquered first, before we can make a considerable progress in something that is good: and none of our enemies is very easily to be overcome, but some are very stubborn. Therefore courage and patience are required: and thus we may be sure to have the victory at last.

Subdue thy passions, O my soul:
Maintain the fight, thy work pursue;
Daily thy rising sins control,
And be thy vict'ries ever new.

The land of triumph lies on high,
There are no fields of battle there:

LORD, I would conquer till I die,
And finish all the glorious war.

Let ev'ry flying hour confess,
I gain thy gospel fresh renown:
And when my life and labours cease,
May I possess the promis'd crown.

WE are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST: whom GOD hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, ROM. iii. 24, 25.

How sweet are the words, "by grace, without merit, ye are saved!" O an inexhaustible fountain of all comfort and divine strength! O how little are the generality of vain and worldly people, who still feed upon husks, acquainted with these words! How little are they relished by our self-righteous moral christians! But O! how deliciously does a poor hungering sinner fare upon them! there is hardly any thing less known and understood, as to the power and experience, than the mystery of CHRIST's suffering and dying for us, and justification by faith in him; though it is the only paradise and element of believers, and the greatest jewel restored by the reformation. Such talking and representations as strike the imagination, are not sufficient; but we must also feel the mortal wounds of sin, by which the flesh is mortified, and be actually healed by the stripes of CHRIST.

God, the great God, that rules the skies,
The gracious and the just,
Makes his own Son a sacrifice;
And here lies all our trust.

Here rest, my faith, and ne'er remove;
Here let repentance rise,

While I behold his bleeding love,
His dying agonies.

With shame and sorrow here I own
How great my guilt has been:
This is my way t' approach the throne,
And God forgives my sin.

SEE that ye fall not out by the way, GEN. xlv. 24.

JOSEPH having shewn himself fully reconciled to his brethren dismisses them with this needful caution, "See that ye fall not out by the way;" he knew they were but too apt to be quarrelsome; one might say, 'It was you that first upbraided him with his dreams;' another, 'It was you that said, Let us kill him;' another, 'It was you that stripped him of his coat;' another, 'It was you that threw him into the pit;' another, 'It was you that sold him to the Ishmaelites,' &c. Thus their journey to their father's house would be very uncomfortable, if this spirit of quarrelling and upbraiding once got possession of them.

Fellow christians, what a lesson is here for us? what says our Lord JESUS to us? Love one another, live in peace; whatever occurs, "let us not fall out by the way." Are we not all brethren? Have we not all one Father? Are we not all subjects of free and sovereign grace? Are we not agreed in essential points? Are we not all sinners by nature and practice? Have we not all one object of faith? Are we not all travelling the same road? O then, why should we fall out by the way! Suppose we be of different denominations, yet holding the same head, why cannot we love as brethren? (the best and most enlightened of all "see but in part, through a glass darkly," what a powerful reason is here for mutual forbearance?) Let not the strong despise the weak, nor the weak judge the strong. Suppose our way should part a little as to externals, yet all setting out from the same spiritual Egypt, all under the same leader, why may we not all hope to meet at last in the true Canaan? Have we not open and secret enemies enow, but we must quarrel one with another? Satan, false professors, and the ungodly world are unanimous in their opposition to us; let us be united, that they prevail not against us, PHILIP. ii. 3, 2.

21 OCT.

(294)

WHERE shall I find rest? — Answer; Thus saith the LORD, stand ye in the ways and see; and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls, JER. vi 16. See also MATT. xi. 28, 29.

In our own ways there is nothing but trouble; but giving ourselves entirely up to be guided of God at his own pleasure, we can always be easy, since we know, that by every step he brings us nearer to heaven. The only way to rest, is the way of repentance and faith; in which we look always upon ourselves from the beginning to the end; not only as utterly lost and condemned, but also as perfectly reconciled and justified malefactors in CHRIST. Thus to abide in him, to let him work alone, and be truly resigned to his ways, will certainly have the desired effect; whilst by the righteousness and workings of our own hearts we can never attain to it, or, which is worse, may be lulled into a false rest.

LORD, I believe a rest remains
To all thy people known;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And thou art lov'd alone.
A rest, where all our souls desire
Is fixt on things above,

Where grief, and pain, and fear expire,
Cast out by perfect love.
O that I now this rest may know,
Believe, and enter in!
Now, Saviour, now the pow'r bestow,
And let me cease from sin.

22 OCT.

(295)

YE are complete in him, COL. ii. 10.

THINK, O believer, with wonder and amazement, reflect with gratitude and love, that, whilst thou art deploring thy participation in the common ruin of the human nature, and mourning its sad effects within thy soul, thou mayest yet look through all thine imperfection, frailty, and unworthiness, to thy glorious Representative, and see thyself complete in him. The law which would condemn thee, he has completely satisfied;—the obedience which it requires, in order to thine acceptance with God, he hath completely paid; and that eternal life, from which thy sinful imperfections must have for ever barred thee, is now become thine unalienable inheritance, as the reward of his righteousness, who lived and died for thee. Go forth then, and glorify him in heart and life; the more thou believest in him, the more wilt thou love him; and the more thou lovest him, the better wilt thou serve him; until he shall remove thee from this vale of sin and sorrow, let this be thy song in the house of thy pilgrimage.

To all my vileness, CHRIST is glory bright;	Sight to my blindness, to my meanness wealth;
To all my mis'ries, infinite delight;	Life to my death, and to my sickness health;
To all my ign'rance, wise without compare;	To darkness light, my liberty in thrall,
To my deformity, th' eternal fair;	What shall I say—my CHRIST is all in all.

23 OCT.

(296)

*WILL ye speak wickedly for GOD, and talk deceitfully for him? JOE
xiii. 7. Thy word is truth, JOHN xvii. 17.*

WHEN Moses saw an Egyptian and an Israelite striving together, he killed the Egyptian, and saved the Israelite, EXOD. ii. 12. But when he saw two Israelites striving together, he laboured to reconcile them, saying, "Ye are brethren, why do ye strive?" So when we read, or see the Apocryphal Books, or Heathen Story, or Popish Traditions, contradicting the Scriptures; as for instance, Jacob curseth the wrath and anger of Simeon and Levi, for murdering the Shechemites, GEN. xlix. 7. And Judith blessed GOD for killing of them, JUDITH 9. Here, and in such like places, let us kill the Egyptian, but save the Israelite; set a value on the Scriptures, but slight the Apocrypha. But when we meet with any appearance of seeming-contradiction in the canon of Scripture; as where it is said, "GOD tempted Abraham," GEN. xxii. 1. and "GOD tempteth no man," JAMES i. 13. Here now, and in many other places, we must be reconcilers, and distinguish between a temptation of trial, which is from GOD, and a temptation of seducement, which is by the devil; and these two seeming different friends, will appear to be brethren, and agree well.

24 OCT.

(297)

AND Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance, JOSHUA xiv. 13.

THE spies that went up to view the promised land, all, except Caleb and Joshua, made a formidable report of the gigantic inhabitants of Hebron, saying, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." "Caleb, (answering well to his name, which signifies, *All heart*) "stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome." We are told he had another spirit with him, and followed God fully. Moses therefore, because he wholly followed the LORD his God, was commissioned to make him a grant of all the land whereon his feet had troden, which was the mountain of Hebron. Caleb was eighty five years old when he reminded Joshua of this promise; he was forty when Moses sent him to spy out the land; thirty-eight years the LORD had kept him in the wilderness, through the plagues of the desert, and seven years in Canaan, through the perils of war; the city Hebron was already reduced, but the inhabitants had repaired to the fastnesses of the mountain, these he wanted to dispossess; assuring Joshua, he had now the same strength of body and holy confidence in God to engage in this dangerous enterprise, as he had at forty years of age when he was sent as a spy. Joshua blessed him, acknowledged his claim and deserts, besought God to prosper him in his undertaking, and gave him the country; thus was his fidelity and uprightness rewarded.

Leader, are you like-hearted with Caleb? Are you longing after Hebron, that is, communion with God? Are you eager to fight against your spiritual foes, those sons of Anak, lusts, passions, devil and the world? If so, remember the promise, "As your day is, so shall your strength be found;" keep up fellowship with God, and no enemy shall be too strong for you; beware of judging of enemies (by an eye of sense) like the spies, lean not to your own understanding, but follow God fully; eye the Captain of your salvation, fight in his name and strength, and you shall conquer every foe.

25 OCT.

(298)

AND it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first born of the captive that was in the dungeon, Exod. xii. 29.

THE death of every first-born of the Egyptians, carried so lively a resemblance, and bore so natural a relation to their sin in destroying every male of the Israelites, that they must needs perceive it was inflicted as a punishment for that very cruelty; and consequently must conclude, that the God of Israel took particular cognizance of human transactions, and, sooner or later, rewarded every man according to his works. The gradual increase of the judgements inflicted on Egypt, is somewhat remarkable, and equally expressive of the mercy and justice of God. The four first plagues were lothesome, rather than fatal to the Egyptians; but after that of the flies, came the murrain, which chiefly spent its rage upon the cattle: the biles and blains reached both man and beast, though there was still a reserve for life: The hail and locusts extended, in a great measure, even to life itself: the first by an immediate stroke, and both consequently by destroying the fruits of the earth: That of darkness, added consternation to their minds, and lashes to their consciences; and when all this would not reclaim, at length came the decisive blow; first the excision of the first-born, and then the drowning of the incorrigible tyrant, and all his host. —“Great and marvelous are thy works, O LORD GOD Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

26 OCT.

(299)

DRAW me, we will run after thee, SOLOMON'S Song i. 4.—Divine answer; I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee, JER. xxxi. 3.

MANY and various are the ways the Almighty takes in bringing his children to himself; and to a knowledge of the things of their peace; sometimes he draws by the filken bands of love; sometimes by the still small voice of his Spirit; sometimes by the cords of pain and sickness; sometimes he drives them by the storm and tempest of his broken law; but the most effectually in giving his Son to die for them. Reader, pray always to him to make you sensible of the secret tender drawings of his love, and willing to follow them directly. This praying always is very needful, because we are always in want, and without being instant and earnest we cannot receive much. Therefore it is not a hard command, but a great benefit and privilege; as if God should say, "You are a poor child, always wanting something, but you may always pray to me, and I will always hear, and assist, and draw thee after me."

O draw me, Saviour, after thee;
So shall I run and never tire:
With gracious words still comfort me;
Be thou my hope, my sole desire:
Free me from ev'ry weight: nor fear,
Nor sin can come, if thou art here.

O that I as a little child,
May follow thee, nor ever rest,
Till sweetly thou hast pour'd thy mild
And lowly mind into my breast.
Nor ever may we parted be
Till I become one spirit with thee.

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Nor sin can come, if thou art here.

O that I as a little child,
May follow thee, nor ever rest,
Till sweetly thou hast pour'd thy mild
And lowly mind into my breast.
Nor ever may we parted be
Till I become one spirit with thee.

27 OCT.

(300)

THOSE that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed, 1 SAM. ii. 30.

THIS is part of the prophet's message to Eli, when he honoured his sons above God; he had indeed reproved them, saying, "Why do ye these things? for I hear of your evil doings by all the people." But he did not exert his authority in punishing them as they deserved, when they slighted his reproof. This was accounted by God as conniving at their sin. He therefore acquaints him, that Hophni and Phineas, as they had sinned together, should die together, and his posterity be cut off in the flower of their age, and from the high priesthood. Eli was not much affected with this prophecy, till the threatening was repeated by Samuel, an artless child, who did not know the voice of the Lord till Eli instructed him. It appeared then much more terrible than from the mouth of the prophet; and led him humbly to acknowledge the justice of God, and to submit to the sentence with a truly penitent heart. This is written for our admonition. Are we valiant for the truth, regarding neither father or mother, or the most tender relation, where the interest and honour of our God is concerned? Parents, let this be a warning to you to train up your children in the fear of the Lord.

The LORD JEHOVAH calls,
Be ev'ry ear inclin'd:
May such a voice awake each heart,
And captivate each mind.

O harden not your hearts,
But hear his voice to-day;
Lest ere to-morrow's earliest dawn
He call your souls away.

28 OCT.

(301)

ABRAHAM against hope believed in hope, ROM. iv. 21.

O MY soul, thou having not like Abraham only one single, but many thousand promises and patterns of faithful believers before thee, it is fit that thou shouldest strongly rely on the word in faith. And though the LORD delayeth his help, and the evil seemeth to grow worse and worse, be not weak, but rather strong, and rejoice; since the most glorious promises of God are generally fulfilled in such a wondrous manner, that he steps forth to save us at a time when there is the least appearance of it, nay the contrary follows; for in the greatest extremities God is nearest with his help. And this method he chooses, that we may not trust upon any thing that we see or feel, as we are always apt to do, but only upon his bare word, which we can and must depend upon in every state.

How large the promise! how divine,
To Abrah'm and his seed!
"I'll be a God to thee and thine,
Supplying all their need."

The words of this extensive love
From age to age endure;

2

The Angel of the cov'nant proves,
And seals the blessing sure.

Our God, how faithful are his ways!
His love endures the same;
Nor from the promise of his grace
Blots out the sinner's name.

29 OCT.

(302)

IMMEDIATELY I conferred not with flesh and blood, GAL. i. 16.
For the king's commandment was urgent; much more the commandment of the King of kings, DAN. iii. 22. Therefore, be not slothful in business, ROM. xii. 11.

THE speediest and easiest method to accomplish our desire of overcoming the evil and doing the good, is an immediate compliance with our first convictions, without conferring with flesh and blood. If we delay the work, we give room to other people without, and to Satan and to our sinful hearts from within, to persuade us to the contrary; by which the flesh can easily renew its strength, and the spirit will be weakened. And what will be the consequence of this? but, that either we miscarry in our design, or that the conflict will be afterwards so much sharper; and the good work, if not stifled, dropt entirely; yet it will not be done so completely, and with such singleness of heart, as it should be. But if we always narrowly watch our hearts, and are faithful, engaging directly even with the least opposition, then our enemies will not be so strong, and we shall have no reason to despair.

JESU, mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do;
Turn my nature's rapid tide,
Stem the torrent of my pride.

Take away my darling sin,
Make me willing to be clean;
Make me willing to receive
What thy goodness waits to give.

30 OCT.

(303)

NEITHER yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto GOD, as those that are alive from the dead ; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto GOD, ROM. vi. 13.

If GOD has my members as weapons and instruments in his hands, I shall certainly be able not only to work, but also to conquer, since he understands full well how to manage them. May the LORD only give me grace not to wind myself out of his hands, else I must needs be like a dead, uselefs carcass. For how can a pen write alone, without being in the hand of a writer ? It is true indeed, that it is very hard, nay impossible, to be really good, and do all that is good, if we undertake it alone ; but GOD himself living and working in us, and we truly delighting in him, it is very easy and pleasant. Therefore care is only to be taken, that our hearts may be always the working-place, and our members the instruments of GOD, in which and through which he can perform every thing himself.

Now GOD I serve, to him alone
My thankful homage pay ;
My only master CHRIST, I own,
And him will I obey.

To him my members I present,
Which he will not refuse ;

The meanest, basest instrument,
His glory deigns to use.

Servant of sin too long I was,
But CHRIST has set me free ;
Glory to his victorious grace,
Which freely ransom'd me.

31 OCT.

(304)

THE fear of man, bringeth a snare.—Be not conformed to this world.—If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. PROV. XXIX. 25. ROM. xii. 2. 1 JOHN ii. 15.

How many people swell with pride and vanity, for such things as they would not know how to value at all, but that they are admired in the world? How fearful are many of having their houses poorly furnished, or themselves meanly clothed, for this only reason, lest the world should make no account of them, and place them amongst low and mean people? How often would a man have yielded to the haughtiness and ill-nature of others, and shewn a submissive temper, but that he dares not pass for such a poor-spirited man in the opinion of the world? Many a man would often drop a resentment, and forgive an affront, but that he is afraid, if he should, the world would not forgive him. How many wish to be real christians, and would practice christian temperance and sobriety in its utmost perfection, were it not for the censure which the world passes upon such a life? Other have frequent intentions of living up to the rules of the christian religion, which they are frightened from, by considering what the world would say of them. Thus does the impression which we have received from living in the world, enslave our minds, that we dare not attempt to be eminent in the sight of God and holy angels, for fear of being little in the eyes of the world. Reader, how is it with thee?—art thou still hanging between God and the world? Consider for a moment, what can the world give thee in exchange for the favour of God? What can it help thee in sickness, death, and judgement? Make not serious reflection, and the snares of the world will be broken at once.

1 Nov.

(305)

AT the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, DAN. ix. 23. Continuing instant in prayer, ROM. xii. 12.

As soon as we begin to pray earnestly, the LORD hears and signs our petitions to help and bless us: for every supplication is the pronouncing and sealing of a blessing. It is true, we don't always observe it immediately; but in due time we shall certainly receive even a visible help. Therefore let us only go on, and put, as it were, one weight of prayers after another upon the scales of the sanctuary: surely our greatest distress will at last be overbalanced, and salvation brought down. But it is well to be observed, that we must also be watchful, and not act contrary to the intent of our prayers, which might provoke the LORD to disannul the signing of his FIAT (Grant) again, or at least to delay his help. But when he tarries long, it is not his intention to give us a denial, but rather make us more desirous and earnest that he may bestow so much upon us afterwards; for this delay he will certainly well recompense, and grant us abundantly above all that we could ask or think.

LORD, I will not let thee go,
Till the blessing thou bestow:
Hear my Advocate divine;
Lo! to his my suit I join:
Join'd to his, it cannot fail,
Bless me, for I will prevail.

Friend of sinners, King of saints,
Answer my minute wants,
All my largest thoughts require;
Grant me all my heart's desire;
Give me till my cup run o'er,
All and infinitely more.

X

2 Nov.

(306)

WHEN the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise: she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat, GEN. iii. 6. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, &c. JAMES i. 14, 15.

Thus one sin always begets another. By the eyes it rushes into the heart; from the heart it proceeds into the mouth, hands, and feet; from us it is transferred upon others, and thus we go on sinning and falling deeper and deeper. Therefore we must set a strict guard over our eyes and ears; be very cautious, and resist the least beginnings of sin, not making light of any: for the least spark of worldly lust being entertained and cherished, we eat of THE FORBIDDEN TREE standing every where before us; and thereby a great fire may be kindled. But having always our eyes fixed in all our conversation upon the presence of GOD in CHRIST, so as to walk continually in the light, and directly to quell the least inward motion of evil; they will never break forth into gross outward sins, but we shall daily grow in grace. May the LORD enable me to practise this good lesson, and watch himself continually over my heart, eyes, lips, and all other senses and thoughts.

With my whole heart I seek thy face,
O let me never stray
From thy commands, O God of grace,
Nor tread the sinner's way.

Thy word I hide within my heart
To keep my conscience clean,
And be an everlasting guard
From ev'ry rising sin.

3 Nov.

(307)

THE preaching of the cross is to us, which are saved, the power of God,
1 COR. i. 18.

O THAT I might always feed upon, and experience its power, till I have obtained a complete victory. Whosoever was bit by the fiery serpent, looking upon the brazen serpent, lived, NUMB. xxi. 9. Thus always to look upon CHRIST crucified, is the one thing needful, from which all other blessings flow, JOHN iii. 14, 15. O LORD, grant that the eyes of my faith may be immoveably fixed upon thee, upon the cross; so as to be entirely healed at last: for as long as I live, I feel the biting of the old serpent, therefore must I also look upon thee continually.

So did the Hebrew prophet raise
The brazen serpent high;
The wounded felt immediate ease,
The camp forbore to die.

Look upward in the dying hour,
And live, the prophet cries;
But CHRIST performs a nobler cure
When faith lifts up her eyes.

High on the cross the Saviour hung,
High in the heav'ns he reigns:
Here sinners, by th' old serpent stung,
Look, and forget their pains.

When God's own Son is lifted up,
A dying world revives;
The Jew beholds the glorious hope,
Th' expiring Gentile lives.

4 Nov.

(308)

THE law is not made for a righteous man, to condemn him, 1 TIM. i. 9.

FOR he being dead to the law by the death of CHRIST, and living to GOD in righteousness, the law can condemn him no more than a dead man, or one that liveth in heaven already, nay CHRIST himself: for it condemns only the sin, but he is in CHRIST, without sin; the sin being abolished, the wrath and curse of the law is also removed, and grace and blessing restored in its place. CHRIST has taken all his sins upon himself, and imparted his own perfect obedience to the law to him; therefore in CHRIST he has fully satisfied all the demands of the law, and is entirely free from its dreadful denunciations in his conscience; the blood of CHRIST cleansing us from all sins, and consequently from an evil conscience, HEB. ix. 9—14. chap. x. 22. Being sprinkled and covered with his blood and golden robes of grace, the LORD is perfectly pleased, and does not find fault with us any more. It makes intercession for us with GOD, crying continually "Abba, "Abba; mercy, mercy; peace, peace;" and obtains grace, pardon, life and salvation.

Blood has a voice to pierce the skies;
Revenge, the blood of Abel cries:
But the dear stream when CHRIST was slain,
Speaks peace as loud from ev'ry vein,

Pardon and peace from God on high:
Behold, he lays his vengeance by;
And rebels that deserve his sword,
Become the fav'rites of the LORD.

5 Nov.

(309)

THERE is none like unto the GOD of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky, DEUT. xxxiii. 26.

IN these last words to Moses, we have the glory of GOD set forth in the communication of good to GOD's Israel. The whole universe GOD hath made for his own use, to be his chariot for him to ride in; as is represented in Ezekiel's vision. In this chariot GOD's seat or throne is heaven; where he sits and governs. This visible universe, subject to such continual changes and revolutions, we may compare to the wheels of his chariot. GOD's providence is represented by the motion of the wheels: he brings to pass his own counsels in the lower world, and manages and directs all, as a man doth his chariot, which he turns as it pleaseth him. How safe then must they be who are under the wing of the GOD of Jeshurun, who find him reconciled to them by the death of his Son, and feel themselves reconciled to him by the power of his grace! "He rideth on the heavens for their help," and none can outstrip his progress, or obstruct his purpose. Verily, he it is that giveth strength and victory to his people; blessed be GOD! Reader, Is the GOD of Jeshurun, the GOD of Israel, thy GOD? Is he who rideth on the heavens thy help? Does thine heart trust in him alone, and does his grace subdue thine outward iniquities, and thine inbred corruptions? Is he who rideth on the sky thy excellence? Does he seem only excellent in thy eyes, and cause thee to excel in virtue? Has he planted thee among his excellent ones of the earth, and made thee to abound in faith and love, and fruits of righteousness? If the LORD is not thy help, alas! thou wilt be slain by sin, and prove a ruined soul. If the LORD is not thy excellence, thou art still an apostate spirit, a stranger unto GOD, and to his CHRIST. Awake, arise and call on GOD; his ear is open unto prayer; and thou art yet on mercy's ground: O call upon him speedily, and cry unto him earnestly, that thou perish not.

6 Nov.

(310)

LET your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, HEB. xiii. 5. For they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction: for the love of money is the root of all evil, &c. 1 TIM. vi. 9, 10.

A COVETOUS man is called an idolater, and has no part in the kingdom of God: but who believes that he is covetous? Now here you see, that every one is actually covetous who is not content with what he has. And what says the apostle of such as will be rich? **THEY FALL.** Not only, it was possible for them to fall: no, they actually fall. O reader, be frightened; destroy the covetous desires of thy heart, and keep it disentangled from temporal things; for who knows how soon you must go out of this world, and leave every thing behind? Away from it with thy heart, else thy death will be very hard. The Christian's motto is, **GOD AND ENOUGH:** for he that has GOD, is content; and consequently always rich enough, even in poverty. And that must be a covetous man indeed, who has not enough, having GOD. O LORD, make me so free by faith from the love of earthly things, that I may equally praise thee, whether thou be pleased to give me something, or take it away from me; and that I may never covetously refuse that to others or to myself, that thou hast given, and should be bestowed upon us.

The rich young man whom JESUS lov'd,
Should warn us to forbear:

His love of earthly treasures prov'd
A fatal golden snare. MARK x. 24

7 Nov.

(311)

THE soul of the diligent shall be made fat, PROV. xiii. 4.

You are concerned for having no more grace. What is the reason? Perhaps you are indolent, careless, and unfaithful. And though you have no warrant even for an hour to live, yet unreasonably you suppose to have time enough; therefore you are not serious, diligent, and fervent in praying for sufficient strength, to be always prepared, and have boldness in death. No wonder, if you do not immediately resist sin, that it grows strong, and you are always weak and discouraged. And how can you expect to receive more grace, if you do not faithfully improve what little you have? If you would but diligently and faithfully apply yourself to the word and prayer, God would certainly not be wanting on his part to fulfil his promises, and give you enough: but not otherwise. For it is well to be observed: and we must know it once for all, that there is no such thing as making any progress in grace and carrying our point, unless we are mindful of ourselves, watching and praying against all sins, and whatever may be an hinderance on one hand; and following with all diligence that which is good, and what may be a furtherance on the other. It is not enough to use *SOME*, but we must use *ALL* diligence; and according as our grace is increased, our diligence must increase also; since it goes against the stream.

Right to resist the sinful pow'r,
Requires a strong restraint;

| We must be watchful ev'ry hour,
And pray, but never faint.

8 Nov.

(312)

IN lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves, PHIL. ii. 3. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST. For if a man think himself to be something, &c. But let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another, GAL. vi. 2, 3, 4.

IF we were truly humble, and looked upon ourselves as the most miserable of all, we should willingly submit to all adversities, and patiently bear the burdens and infirmities of others, considering, that God has born with us a great deal more. Observing therefore the faults of our neighbour, we must not forget our own. Perhaps in other things we are weaker than he. This must restrain us from judging rashly, or speaking unadvisedly to others; but first, we should speak to God about it, and then try with gentle means to bring them to rights again. Nay, the best method is to consider our neighbour on the good, and ourselves on the bad side: and to see whether we can excuse him, and accuse ourselves. And if his fault could not be excused in any manner, we must not suffer him to stir up our corruption, but come in with prayer between God and him, to plead his cause before his throne in hearty love. This requires more than censorious judging. It is very easy to find fault with others, but to shew love, and restore them by prayer and brotherly correction, is quite another thing.

Bless'd are the souls, who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war;

God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great,

THOU openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing, **PSAL.**
cxlv. 16.

Who considers these words enough? The hand of GOD being my capital cellar and storehouse, is it not a shame to be anxiously careful for any thing? Has the LORD all things in his hand? then surely I shall receive what he has for me; none will be able to withhold it. Faith has always a free access to the treasures of GOD, who is never wanting. Christians have their chests, cellars, and treasures in such a high place, even in GOD, that no thief can rob them, and they are sure to have enough in GOD. And though the LORD should try them with want a little while, yet he relieves them in due time: their bread must rain from heaven, rather than that they should be left without. You need not, says CHRIST, seek these other things, straight they shall be brought to you, if ye only abide in me. If this does not comfort and strengthen us, nothing else will. Now many rely on their full pockets, and purses, but if they had true faith, it would be enough that they believed and had it in GOD's hand, purse and chest. If the LORD is pleased to bestow some provision upon him, he blesses him for it, and is careful to apply it well. But if he thinks proper to deny it him, he is equally content and cheerful.

The LORD is good, the LORD is kind;
Great is his grace, his mercy sure;

And the whole race of man shall find
His truth from age to age endure.

10 Nov.

(314)

AND they withstood Uziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD GOD,
2 CHRON. XXVI. 18.

HERE is the only blot we find on the name of Uziah: As long as he sought the LORD, and worshipped him according to divine appointment, God made him to prosper, God helped him marvellously, till he was strong; but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his own destruction. He was not content with the honours God had put upon him, but would usurp those that were forbidden him, like our first parents. The chief priest, and other priests, were ready to burn incense for the king, according to the duty of their office; and plainly acquainted him, that if through a mistaken zeal, he offered to do it himself, he would incur the wrath of God, and suffer for it; but this served only to excite his wrath, till he felt the judgment of God's hand in his punishment. Though he strove with the priests, he would not strive with his Maker, but retired as soon as he was smitten with the leprosy. We see in the present instance, as in many others, that "the God we have to do with is a jealous God," who expects all that serve him shall do it according to his own institutions. Do you, Reader, come to him in the way of his appointments. Take care that you come not with unhallowed fire before the LORD, lest you be also smitten. The incense of our prayers must be by faith put into the hands of our LORD JESUS, the great High-priest of our profession; else we shall find ourselves deceived, if we expect it should have acceptance with God.

*HE, the LORD, will beautify the meek with salvation, PSALM cxlix. 4.
And if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, 1 PET. iii. 4.
PSALM x. 17. xxii. 26. xxxvii. 11. xlviii. 10. ISAIAH liv. 11.*

ALL this is for the humble and poor in spirit, How does that agree? poor, and yet blessed? O, yes, poor in ourselves, but blessed and glorious in CHRIST. If we never experience his glory, the reason is, we are not truly sensible of our misery; but when we are come quite low, let us confidently lay hold on CHRIST, and we shall be blessed: for all is ours. We may say, O LORD, if thou art a glorious help to the needy, lo! here is want and misery enough; therefore I come with all my want and poverty to the fulness of thy grace and riches, with my darkness to thy light, with my death to thy life. Grant that all my evils may be swallowed up by thy goodness and glorious deliverance. Mine innumerable wants I set before thee, as so many empty vessels, and desire to have them filled with thy spiritual and heavenly blessings.

O might I hear thy heav'nly tongue
But whisper, "Thou art mine!"
Those gentle words should raise my song
To notes almost divine.

How would my leaping heart rejoice,
And think my heav'n secure!
I trust the all-creating voice,
And faith desires no more.

12 Nov.

(316)

BE renewed in the spirit of your mind, EPH. iv. 23.

O LORD, grant that I may daily and hourly repent, have evermore a tender feeling of my sins, that by the power of thy death the old man may be crucified, and by the power of thy resurrection the new man may rise up, and grow daily more and more in thy favour. Let me ever be in earnest, and look upon every day as the very first and the very last; that with each I may, as it were, begin anew to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, and so be always prepared for death and eternity. Give me grace to surmount all difficulties, and to avoid every thing that may prove a torment of conscience in the hour of death. And as there is no standing still, I humbly beseech thee to stir me up daily and hourly more and more, that I may make all haste, and "give all diligence to make my calling and election sure."

LORD, I am vile, conceiv'd in sin;
And born unholy and unclean;
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts the race, and taints us all.
Soon as we draw our infant breath
The seeds of sin grow up for death;

The law demands a perfect heart;
But we're defil'd in every part.

Great GOD! create my heart anew,
And form my spirit pure and true:
O make me wise betimes to spy
My danger and my remedy.

13 Nov.

(317)

HE has dispersed, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever,
PSALM cxii. 9. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, ECCLES. xi. 6.*

THOSE that lay up treasures on earth, suffer nothing to lie long useless, but lend it out as fast as they can; and such as desire to reap soon and plentifully, are careful to sow soon and plentifully. Therefore lend and sow ye also in good time; for there may be times when you cannot shew charity, or at least not so largely. We must not pretend to pay the debt of charity with some poor mites and pence. If you will give something, give bountifully; take your hands full, as if you were a sowing, like the poor widow with her two mites, which she sowed out freely, though it was her whole substance. But the rich ones were not so liberal, but covetously offered only what they could spare very well. Is it not said; we should sow, and consequently take hands-full; for God loveth a cheerful giver, and will in his turn dispense again bountifully to you, that ye shall have sufficiency in all things to every good work. (But God dispensing so bountifully to you, why should you then grudge him any thing, or make only such poor returns?) For what we do to our neighbour, is the same as if it were done to God himself; if done in faith and love.

Awake, my zeal, awake, my love,
And serve my Saviour here below,
In works which all the saints above,
Which holy angels cannot do,

Awake, my charity, and feed
The hungry soul, and clothe the poor:
In heav'n are found no sons of need;
There all these duties are no more.

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(316)

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And serve my Saviour here below,
In works which all the saints above,
Which holy angels cannot do,

Awake, my charity, and feed
The hungry soul, and clothe the poor;
In heav'n are found no sons of need;
There all these duties are no more.

14 Nov.

(318)

HE shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities, PSALM CXXX. 8. O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, JEREM. xiv. 8. In wrath remember mercy, HABAK. iii. 2.

DESPAIR not, O my soul, in any tribulation or conflict, as if it were impossible to overcome it. The all-healing word of God contains advice and comfort for all cases. The LORD being thy helper in all adversities, and able to turn the sharpest afflictions into the greatest blessings, he would never smite, nor withhold something from thee, if he was not willing also to heal, and give thee something better in its place. O LORD, I trust thou wilt carry me through all difficulties. Though my misery and weakness were ever so great, yet there is nothing too great for thee; it is all one to thee, to help in great or little distresses: nay, the more I am surrounded with grief and weakness, the more wilt thou pity, spare and nourish me, as a tender mother does the least of all her children; and the more there will be occasion for thee to shew thy mighty salvation; for the least is impossible to me, but the greatest and most difficult things are possible and very easy to thee. The sharper and longer my distress and conflicts have been, the nearer, greater, and sweeter, I trust, will also be my victory and salvation; and I shall not be tempted above measure. Yes, the LORD will assist me to conquer all, even the most stubborn enemies.

There's full redemption at his throne
For sinners long enslav'd;

The great Redeemer is his Son:
And Israel shall be sav'd.

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15 Nov.

(319)

THERE is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until you take away the accursed thing from among you, JOSHUA vii. 13. See also 2 PET. i. 4. Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

THE entertaining of every worldly lust, and indulgence of any known wilful sin, is such an accursed thing, by which we are deprived of the power of God that we cannot stand before our enemies. Behold therefore the severity of God, JOSH. vii. 21—26. and be more earnest. Make all haste to flee from the lust of the world, especially from the lust of the eye, which is the love of money. What more needful than to break off, even the most subtil and specious bands of unrighteousness. Unless the splinters of the unjust mammon be taken out, the wound cannot be healed up. Nay, examine thyself closely in other things, and whatever sinful lust harbours in thy breast, be faithful to put it off, and flee from it, else you must not wonder at your being so weak in spirit. He that does not resist the sinful motions of his heart, will also very easily give a loose to his hands and tongue. But he that immediately subdues the inward corruptions, will certainly be preserved from their breaking out in sinful actions. O LORD, deliver me from all accursed things, and keep my heart always under thy closest inspection and discipline. Amen.

Why should my passion mix with earth,
And thus debase my heav'nly birth?

Why should I cleave to things below,
And let my God, my Saviour go?

16 Nov.

(320)

I *Abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes, JOB xiii. 6.*

My dear Reader, reflect a moment who it was that made this confession, and consider the many excellencies that he had; see chap. xxxi. Doubtless you will be ready to ask, why this self-abhorrence? what did this man want? Let me give the answer for you; Before his eyes were opened, the very thing that you do, if in the like confidence; and the want of which makes every man vile and despicable in the pure eye of God, self-knowledge, or humility. Elihu charges Job home with an undue opinion of his own righteousness; and God, who by stroke upon stroke, and not one too much, had brought him to the dunghill, is represented as carrying on the same accusation against him. The whole issues in Job's humiliation, as a most important lesson of instruction to all mankind, never to stand upon their vindication with God; and the book, in this view of it, is preparatory to the gospel and a striking comment on those words of St Paul and the Psalmist, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; in thy sight shall no man living be justified. God be merciful to me a sinner;" is a hard prayer. One eye upon the perfection of God's law, and another upon your own heart, may possibly bring you up to it.

17 Nov.

(321)

AND they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, REV. v. 9.

In heaven we shall have a perfect knowledge of sin, far beyond any thing we now contrive of it, in conjunction with the greatness of our deliverance; and the glory of redeeming mercy, will be the eternal ground of our love and adoration. On earth, it is the great exercise and difficult work of faith, to see sin and CHRIST at the same time, or be penetrated with a lively sense of our desert, and absolute freedom from condemnation. But the more we know of both, the nearer approach we shall make to heaven; and we are our own greatest enemies, if, together with the fullest comprehension of sin, and the deepest humiliation for it, we do not look steadily unto JESUS, and see it taken away by the Lamb of God. This, though continually repeated by the heavenly choir, is called their *new song*; because it is always matter of as great joy to them, as if they had never sung it before; and because the love of God and of CHRIST in their redemption, is always opening upon them with new and increasing wonders. O my soul; let nothing, let not thy sin, hinder thee from beginning it now.

He worthy is to sit
By spirits at rest,
Who once in this desert
His Godhead confess'd,
My soul bear a part,
For ransom'd thou art

By JESU's blood-shedding,
His burial and smart.

To him that was slain,
The scorn'd Nazarene,
Be glory and honour;
Let all say, "Amen."

Y

18 Nov.

(322)

F*OLLOW* me, LUKE v. 27. *And endure hardness as a good soldier of*
CHRIST, 2 TIM. ii. 3.

HE that strenuously endeavours to break his own will in every thing, and resolutely overcomes his natural aversion to prayer, loves humility, and every good work, shews more power than another who can do it with more ease. With this faithfulness the LORD is so well pleased, that he rewards it at last, and gives us grace to do it also with a willing heart; but we must first be made truly sensible of the deep corruption of our hearts, that then we may use the more violence in prayer. And if we are but going on in this conflict, the delays of GOD are soon made up with so much greater deliverance. But if we pray only, and do not also quickly resist the propensity of our own heart in all things, there will never be such a thing as making any progress at all: since the stubbornness of our flesh requires it, that prayer and conflict must always go hand in hand. Only it is to be observed, that all this must be done in faith. Now, O LORD, grant that I may quickly take all thy hints. Thou art a faithful GOD indeed, thou callest, warnest and movest me often enough; O that I was faithful also punctually and immediately to follow thee in all things, should it be ever so much against the inclination of my heart at first. May I never, through unbelief, unfaithfulness, confusion, self-will, and overdoings, bring any affliction upon me, and hurt myself, not so much as in body, much less in soul.

My dearest Saviour and my guide,
I would be walking at thy side;

O let me never run astray,
Nor follow the forbidden way.

19 Nov.

(323)

THE LORD is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being, ACTS xvii. 27, 28. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered, LUKE xii. 7.

O THE close and more than maternal care! Nothing is so mean, but it is under the providence of GOD, since even the least things can either hurt or profit the soul. And how sweet is it to observe his footsteps even in the minutest things, and to be satisfied that we may trust our greater and lesser concerns to his care! O LORD, grant that I may never swerve from, and do any thing without thee; but that my goings in and goings out may be always done in thy presence, as if I had to do with none but thee; nay, as if we both lived alone together in the world. O that I could transact, as it were, all my affairs with thee alone, and in all places look upon thee as if thou wast only a GOD for me. Let me always carefully observe all the inward and outward testimonies of thy providence, so as daily and hourly to have a true sense of thy gracious presence in every thing, more or less important; and thereby to be ever strengthened in faith, and kept in a composed state of mind; considering that nothing happens by mere chance, but every thing is wisely ordered by thy providential care to our good; firmly believing, if any thing goes contrary to expectation, that something better will follow in its stead, if we only can be quiet and wait the time.

God, that must stoop to view the skies,
And bow to see what angels do,
Down to our earth he casts his eyes,
And bends his footsteps downward too.

He overrules all mortal things,
And manages our mean affairs:
On humble souls the King of kings
Bestows his counsels and his cares.

20 Nov.

(324)

CLEAVE to that which is good, ROM. xii. 9. Seek those things which are above, COL. iii. 1.

THE manners of such things or persons as we frequently converse with, cleave very easily to us. If we converse much with God and heavenly things, we shall be heavenly-minded; but if we deal much with the world and temporal things, we must be sensual and worldly-minded. Up therefore with thy heart to God: lift it hourly up to him; and though it sinks down often to the earth again, yet the Lord has patience, and will as often receive and accept of it again. Therefore raise it up continually, and take great care to keep it above, that it may not sink down and be defiled and cloyed with worldly things again. Thus it will be easy, whilst on the contrary it is a hard matter to abide in a spiritual frame; like a feather which easily rises higher and higher when kept above ground, but moves very heavy upwards, when once fallen into the dirt. This you may take as a lively figure of an easy and heavy method in the practice of religion. Choose, now, which you please. O that I may always choose the best, namely, the work and sufferings of the Lord, and never plunge myself into needless troubles and conflicts.

Descend from heav'n, immortal Dove;
Stoop down and take us on thy wings,
And mount and bear us far above
The reach of these inferior things.

Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.

21 Nov.

(325)

LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, &c. LUKE ii. 29, 30.
Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, &c. ISA xxxv. 3, 4.

Not the weak faith of a fearful, trembling and tempted believer, but the wilful unbelief only is damnable. If I do not reject the ransom of CHRIST my surety, but am desirous to accept of it by faith, it is as impossible that God can reject me, as it is impossible for him to reject my surety, and his own decree and eternal counsel of love; which can never be. O LORD, it goes beyond the reach of all reason, how I shall depart in faith and peace, since I am the weakest of all, and would despair a thousand times for once: But as "thy peace is said to pass all understanding," PHIL. iv. 7. will nevertheless be sufficient to keep even the most fearful and weakest soul; for it is not by any power of our own, but solely by thy divine power, that "we shall be kept through faith unto salvation." And it is equally the same to thee to carry the weakest or the strongest through the gates of death; for since thou art always the same wise, gracious and mighty God, in all circumstances, and must do the work alone for both; thou wilt then surely lend me also thine all sufficient aid and assistance.

Saints by the power of God are kept,
Till the salvation come;
We walk by faith, as strangers here,
Till CHRIST shall call us home.

LORD, at thy temple we appear,
As happy Simeon came,
And hope to meet our Saviour here;
O make our joys the same!

22 Nov.

(326)

O LORD, *how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches, PSALM CIV. 24. Whofo is wife, and will obferve thofe things, &c. PSALM CVII. 43.*

O LORD, how many are thine unknown mercies ! I am furrounded with thy goods on all fides, and yet I obferve and acknowledge them fo little ! If thou haft punifhed even the heathen, for not having minded and glorified thee by thy works, what will become of me ? Pardon, **O** LORD, this my blindnefs and ingratitude, and be pleafed to add to all thy benefactions this one more, that I may always be thankful for every thing, efpecially for the unfpeakable gift of thy Son, and after that for all thy works of creation and providence alfo. Grant that in all thy creatures, I may fee and adore thine infinite power, wifdom and goodnefs, and be thereby continually ftrengthened in faith and ftripped up to thy praife and love. Thus let me always converse with, cleave to thee, and have uninterrupted communion with thee, that nothing may interfere and difturb this religious difpofition of my foul in the leaft. Yes, **O** LORD, grant me this wifdom and clofe attention, for thy glory's fake. Amen.

The glories of my maker, God,
My joyful voice fhall fing,
And call the nations to adore
Their Former and their King.

The brightnefs of our Maker's name
The wide creation fills ;
And his unbounded grandeur flies
Beyond the heav'nly hills.

23 Nov.

(327)

THE sword of the LORD and of Gideon, JUDGES vii. 20. *For they are bread for us : their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us : fear them not,* NUMB. xiv. 9. *But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went,* ver 24. *Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee,* PSALM lxxvi. 10.

TAKE care, O my soul, that there may also be another, namely, a kingly spirit with thee, as there was with Joshua and Caleb, not to be discouraged on account of thy weakness and great number of frailties and enemies, as if it was impossible to live holily and get the victory. Behold CHRIST, the true and great Joshua and Caleb, marches out before thee, to make war himself against thine enemies, and who can conquer him ! he is unchangeable, his spirit now is as mighty as ever, and his sword as powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. Against thy various infirmities he offers also a variety of divine strength, and against each of thine enemies he holds forth to thee a particular sword in his word ; and abiding in his word thou shalt surely conquer. Though the enemy should raise thine inward and outward calamities to the highest degree, as so many strong walls, yet he must fall ; one single word will strike him down.

Not all that tyrants think or say,
With rage and light'ning in their eyes,

Nor hell shall fright my heart away,
Should hell with all its legions rise.

24 Nov.

(328)

HEARKEN unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, ISA. xlv. 12, 13. chap. lxiv. 6.

TRUE religion is founded upon the knowledge of the true GOD. Sinners are apt to think they have a high opinion of GOD, because they think highly of his mercy; whereas GOD is as holy, and as just, as he is merciful; and he will as certainly punish the guilty, as he will pardon the penitent and contrite. "GOD, I thank thee, I am not as other men are," says every self-righteous sinner; not considering, that if GOD were extreme to mark what is amiss, no flesh living could be justified: "GOD be merciful to me, a sinner;" says every true christian, and real believer. Till this be the language of thy heart, O my soul, till thou feelest thyself a lost, ruined and helpless sinner; till thou art brought to acknowledge the justice of GOD in thy condemnation; till thou art driven to CHRIST, as thy only refuge, and hope of salvation, thou art "ignorant of GOD's righteousness, art going about to establish thine own righteousness, and thou dost not submit to the righteousness of CHRIST."

I am, saith CHRIST, the *Way*;
Now if we credit him,
All other paths must lead astray,
How fair soe'er they seem.
I am, saith CHRIST, the *Truth*;
Then all that lacks this test,

Proceed it from an angel's mouth,
Is but a lie at best.
I am, saith CHRIST, the *Life*;
Let this be seen by faith;
It follows without further strife,
That all besides is death.

25 Nov.

(329)

THOU therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST,
2 TIM. ii. 3.

PRINCES combat with flesh and blood, christians wrestle with principalities and powers; their wars give days of truce, ours not a minute of cessation; conditions of peace there may cause retreat, nothing but death here can raise the siege; kings, if overcome, may save themselves by flight, but christians may as soon fly from themselves, as from their enemies; the soldier of CHRIST is in a field of continued conflict; he cannot let fall his hands, but Amalek prevails: Not to be a conqueror is to be a prisoner; not to win the field, is to lose the soul; security wounds thee, yielding kills thee, but victory crowns thee. Therefore watch as for thy life; fight as for thy soul; the time will come, when "these enemies thou seest to-day, thou shalt see them no more for ever;" then thou shalt lay down thy sword, and take up thy palm, and solemnize thy victory in glory for ever. Let then the prospect of heavenly glory fire thee; though thine enemies be powerful, yet remember to go forth against them in the strength of the Captain of thy salvation; though assaults be many, and my enemies mighty, if GOD strengthen me; I have enough to comfort me; for the greater my enemy, the more glorious my victory; and the more glorious my victory, the more triumphant my glory.

I Will heal your backslidings, JER. iii. 22. It is GOD who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, PHIL. ii. 13.

O MY dear Saviour, I would fain believe in thee, be faithful, obedient, and work always that which is good. And since this is also thy will, I trust it shall be done; for if thou wilt and I will, who can hinder it? True, sin, flesh, world and devils are against it; but shall these enemies be stronger than thou, the mighty GOD? Shall their opposition be able to quell thy work in me, if I do not consent to it? That can never be. The more violence they use upon me, the more earnest will I be upon thee in prayer; and the more I pray, the more glorious will thine assistance be: the more they hinder, the more thou wilt further, that all their hinderances shall be swallowed up by thy furtherances; as the serpents of the forcerers in Egypt were swallowed up by the serpent of Moses. The enemy will fall by his own sword, and the greatest distress and opposition will turn to my good, and to the promoting of thy work. For if I do not abide in CHRIST, praying continually, every thing can hinder me; but abiding in him, all obstructions not only prove ineffectual, but useful and profitable.

We honour our exalted King;
How sweet are his commands!
He guards our souls from hell and sin
By his almighty hands.

Fearless of hell and ghastly death,
We'll break thro' ev'ry foe;
The wings of love and arms of faith
Shall bear us conqu'rors thro',

27 Nov.

(331)

I Am like a green fir tree; from me is thy fruit found, HOSEA xiv. 8. *I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground,* MAL. iii. 11. See also ISA1. xxvii. 2, 6.

Is it not a disagreeable thing for a gardener to see the finest blossoms and fruits destroyed by the caterpillars? Doth it not rejoice him to see all the branches bow with ripe fruits? O my heavenly Lord, grant that I may not displease, but rejoice thy heart also. Let me abide in CHRIST, my true vine, and always bring forth good fruits. But since every fruit has its enemies, and thou hast no sooner worked any thing, than the insects of sin endeavour to destroy it: I beseech thee to make me fearful and careful in every good work. Rebuke the devourer presently, and preserve me as a branch of CHRIST, night and day, as thou hast promised, that my fruits may endure to eternity. Doth a diligent gardener dress and cultivate his garden as well as he can, why shouldst not thou cultivate my heart also, since thou art honoured by my fruits? O! yes: I trust the crystal stream of thy throne will water me, that I can go and bring forth greater plenty of fruits.

Like trees of myrrh and spice we stand
Planted by God the Father's hand;
And all his springs in Zion flow,
To make the young plantation grow.

Let my Beloved come and taste
His pleasant fruits at his own feast. —
"I come, my spouse, I come," he cries,
With love and pleasure in his eyes.

28 Nov.

(332)

I Will (do it.) MATT. viii. 3. And what is that? Whatsoever thou desirest: For the LORD *will fulfil the desire of them that fear him*, PSAL. cxlv. 19.

YEA, he does "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think;" granting not only according to the notion of our narrow hearts, but according to the riches of his glory, as becomes his Majesty. CHRIST delights in great petitions; for he is a great LORD, and is rich unto all that call upon him. He has all the riches of his merits and gifts, not for himself, (since being the very GOD, he wanted nothing for himself) but only for us, even the rebellious, who sincerely call upon him. Therefore what he has as Mediator, is not his, but all belongs to me, if I but call upon him. O my soul, pray to him, nay be much in prayer; and as often as thou pourest out thy soul before him in prayer, let nothing resound in thy heart, but these words: I WILL, I WILL DO IT." As GOD can never lie, there is not one single groan lost; but every one will be found to be a jewel in the life to come; by which thy riches are increased, and one treasure put to another. O! how much is there neglected in this already! why should you not be earnest and instant now to redeem that little remaining part of thy time, by prayer for eternity, to lay up there many treasures, and richly adorn thy crown.

○ LORD, grant that this may be done.

Now is the time, he bends his ear,
And waits for your request;

| Come, lest he rouse his wrath, and swear,
"Ye shall not see my rest."

29 Nov.

(333)

JOSHUA drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai, *JOSHUA* viii. 26. For this purpose the Son of GOD was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, 1 *JOHN* iii. 8.

THE dominion of any one sin, is inconsistent with the grace of GOD and true saving faith, *ROM.* vi. 14. Therefore all these wicked inhabitants of thy heart must be destroyed, and none suffered to live and reign in thee; since even by one single sin we may be utterly undone and destroyed, as a bird is caught in one single snare. And though you are actually converted, and have gained the dominion over your sins; yet you must not draw back your hand, and lay the spear and sword of the Spirit aside. There is no rest or cessation of arms here. Satan left *CHRIST* only for a time; much more will he renew his assaults upon us again and again: nay, if a man is not watchful, but presumptuous, "he takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself." But if one conflict listeth long, remember that this is also the case of others; and even the ancient fathers have gone under it till they were grey. At last the victory will be the more sweet and glorious. Only above all things take the shield of faith; for faith alone triumphs, by which we are in covenant with *CHRIST*, and he makes one cause with us.

'Tis faith that conquers earth and hell,
By a celestial pow'r;

| This is the grace that shall prevail
In the decisive hour.

30 Nov.

(334)

COME, *buy without money and without price, ISAIAH IV. 1. Come, for all things are now ready, LUKE XIV. 17. Him (be it who it will) that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out, JOHN VI. 37.*

How could a tender mother's heart cast out her sick child calling for help? Come, my poor soul, come only as well as thou canst. Better to come in thy miserable, unwilling and lazy condition, than not at all. Do not imagine that it will be disagreeable to CHRIST, if you must put a constraint upon yourself, and cannot come, and pray to him with a sensible joy and strong faith; for he does not say, him that comes with a sensible strong faith; but "him that comes," without any limitation, "I will in no wise cast out." It is not required, to bring any money of our own worthiness, but only the whole heap of our misery along with us, and desire grace. GOD does not look upon the sensible power; (for this is his particular gift, which he could soon give, if need was) but upon the sincerity, application and earnestness of a poor sinner. John Bunyan very fitly compares such a one, to a man who would fain ride a full gallop, whose horse is hardly able to go a good trot. In this instance the intention of the rider is not to be judged by the slow paces of his horse, (which resembles our corrupt and unwilling nature) but by his whippings, spur-rings and beatings of the beast.

See, dearest LORD, our willing souls
Accept thine offer'd grace;

| We bless the great Redeemer's love,
And give the Father praise.

BE not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, ROM. xii. 21. For, who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?
 1 PET. iii. 13.

THERE is none can harm you; for it is twice said; *All is yours, 1 COR. iii. 21, 22.* But what is mine must be serviceable and useful to me. We are told, *ROM. viii. 13.* that all things, consequently the very devils, with their whole armour, work together for our good, to make us more victorious and religious; and having so many assistants, we must at last be good indeed. For whatever will hurt us, if we take the right course, must rather serve for a sword of defence in the hand of faith. For instance, if any thing contrary happens to you, do not look upon men, but directly upon GOD himself, as if you had to do with him alone. Therefore take it patiently from his hands for your trial and humbling: then you have a blessing directly. If you meet with strong temptations, by the great corruptions from within and without, let them make you only so much more wise and careful as to think, because there are dangerous enemies, I must watch and use all possible vigilance. And though it is right and needful to despair of thy own sufficiency and strength; yet if you keep and press only so much closer to CHRIST in prayer and faith, like a child to its mother when it sees a devouring beast running upon it, all the evil will certainly turn to our good.

How glorious, LORD, thy wisdom shines,
 And baffles Satan's deep designs;

Thy pow'r is sov'reign to fulfil
 The noblest counsels of thy will.

PRAYER shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised,
 PSALM lxi. 15.

O WHAT a condescending King, who can always be approached! who would not pray? you say, O that my coldness and indifference would permit me to do it! But are you not sensible of your wants and miseries? Is not this coldness and backwardness misery enough? Therefore you ought also to pray, and pray most when you are so dull and drowsy; else it will never be better with you. Arise therefore and pray, the good Spirit of God will assist you in it. “Encouraged by the
 “promises of a prayer-hearing God, and the special assistance of the
 “holy Spirit in this work, we must even in the greatest conflicts
 “not omit to resist the temptations of the devil. And though we have
 “sinned, not defer it long; but pray directly, and say, The LORD is
 “merciful, and I am unworthy and unable to pray; but alas! what
 “shall I do? Shall I wait till I am worthy and able? O no, perhaps
 “this time will never come; for I am always a great, miserable sinner,
 “A christian stands always in need of the LORD’s prayer; for since
 “the sense and terror of sin does not leave him, he can never leave
 off prayer.” O LORD grant that this continual fire may never be
 extinguished in my heart.

Arise, my soul, from deep distress,
 And banish every fear;

| God calls thee to his throne of grace,
 To spread thy sorrows there.

3 DEC.

(337)

WHAT dost thou here, Elijah? 1 KINGS xix. 19.

LET this question be supposed as addressed to us, What dost thou here in this world, into which thou art sent? Art thou working "the work of him that sent thee, or standing all the day idle?" How dost thou acquit thyself in the duties of thy particular calling? Art thou upright, conscientious and useful therein? Art thou in the post assigned thee by heaven, truly called, and properly qualified for it? or hast thou obtruded thyself into it, without warrant or invitation; and therefore hast no cause to expect success? What dost thou here in this retirement? Is the world shut out of thy thoughts, and are the visits of the blessed Spirit invited? What dost thou here, if it be not thy wish and endeavour to have communion with the Father, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST? What dost thou here, if thy peace with an offended GOD is not already made, or most earnestly desired and sought after? If thou really wantest peace and safety, plead the blood of JESUS; flee to the city of refuge, before the pursuer of blood overtake thee, and thou perish from the way. "Remember Lot's wife," and look not behind thee, lest thou become a monument of wrath. What dost thou here, in times of trial and temptation; art thou flying from the danger, or boldly facing it in the name and strength of the LORD? Art thou ashamed of the cross, or dost thou willingly take it upon thee? Elijah failed here, he fled from Jezebel; such an one as Elijah feared; howl fir-trees, if the cedars be thus shaken. What dost thou here below? Art thou for pitching thy tent on this side Jordan, satisfied with thy present portion? Or art thou "looking to a better country, to a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD?" Life is uncertain, death approaches, the Judge is at the door, then "perpare to meet thy GOD."

Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy fight to live;

| And O, thy servant, LORD, prepare,
A good account to give!

Z

4 DEC.

(338)

MINE eyes are ever towards the LORD: for he shall pluck my feet out of the net, PSALM XXV. 15. *Happy is the man that feareth alway,* PROV. XXVIII. 14.

O how long can some enemies hide themselves with their nets before our eyes, and draw us in all on a sudden. It is unspeakable how cunning and powerful our enemies are, how they lay in wait every where, that in all places and at all times we are surrounded, as it were, with many cruel murderers of souls. Blessed is he that keeps clear from self-confidence; but rather fearing always, says within himself, as soon as he awakes in the morning, Who knows what temptations I may meet with to day? perhaps when I rise, by the first step my feet may be intangled in dangerous snares and nets. And as self confidence always will, but true confidence in thee, O LORD, never shall be ashamed, ROM. ix. 33. Grant, I beseech thee, that distrusting myself I may fully put my trust on thee, watching evermore in all things, and looking cautiously in all places about me, where there is any fear of danger. Whatever I am about to do or to speak, let me first look upon and converse with thee; that thus keeping always close to thee, I may be preserved against the power and craft of mine enemies, as in a stronghold; and confidently say, according to thy own pattern, given PSALM xvi. 8. "I have set the LORD before me; because he is at "my right-hand, I shall not be moved."

God is my portion and my joy;
His counsels are my light:
He gives me sweet advice by day,
And gentle hints by night.

My soul would all her thoughts approve
To his all-seeing eye:
Not death nor hell my hope shall move,
While such a friend is nigh.

MY Father works hitherto, and I work, (as also the holy Spirit) JOHN V. 17.

O MY poor soul, should the blessed Trinity not be able to destroy the works of the devil, and fulfil his good-will in thee? O! yes, he works both to will and to do; and that very thing which is above your own power, he works, and nothing else. If you can do little, he works much; if nothing at all, so much the better, then he works all: For he is our All; since we are nothing, and can do nothing. And happy are we that we can have him for our assistant in all things; and that the children of God are not required to direct their own steps, but shall be led by their heavenly Father. Now, O LORD, since by the will, guidings and workings of my own heart, I throw only so many hindrances and blocks in my way; grant, I beseech thee, that in true dependence on thee, I may venture every thing; and despairing of my own sufficiency, may always abide in thee, draw all necessary strength from thee by prayer, and bring forth many good fruits which may last to eternity. For the power in me being an eternal power; thy work, weak as it seems now, will last eternally, and none shall be able to destroy it.

Thy counsels, LORD, shall guide my feet
Thro' this dark wilderness;
Thy hand conduct me near thy seat,
To dwell before thy face.

2

What if the springs of life were broke,
And flesh and heart shall faint,
God is my soul's eternal rock,
The strength of ev'ry faint.

2 2

DRAW nigh to GOD, and he will draw nigh to you. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, JAMES iv. 7, 8. And thus the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, chap. v. 16.

O MY dear soul, draw nigh to GOD in prayer, and he will draw nigh to thee; be instant in it, and the devil cannot stand against thee: for the incense of prayer chases all devils, as the smoke the bees; it works wonderful great things, and will make possible what seemeth most impossible. GOD having given thee many things already, this is a great encouragement to hope also for that which thou lackest yet. Therefore only pray confidently, and you shall receive evermore; for unbelief is the only reason that GOD cannot work wonders for us,

My GOD, I bow before thy feet,
When shall my soul get near thy seat?
When shall I see thy glorious face,
With mingled majesty and grace?

How should I love thee and adore,
With hopes and joys unknown before!
And bid this trifling world be gone,
Nor tease my heart, so near thy throne.

Creatures with all their charms should fly
The presence of a GOD so nigh:
My darling sins should lose their name,
And grow my hatred and my shame.

My soul should pour out all her cares,
In flowing words or flowing tears;
Thy smiles should ease my sharpest pain,
Nor shall I seek my GOD in vain.

7 DEC.

(341)

THERE is none good, but one; that is, GOD. MATT. XIX. 17. But every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts is only evil continually, GEN. VI. 5.

A CHRISTIAN, feeling continually the vile corruption of his heart with grief, thinks himself to be the least of all the saints; but a hypocrite, having little sense of sin, takes himself to be better than others. Therefore we cannot be said to have truly repented, except we have an experimental knowledge that there is no good in us, no, not so much as the least degree. Nay, when we are even come to this, and are converted, we must not presumptuously imagine to have got over all the mountains; after many years we may see such abominations, which we thought little of in the beginning. Consequently, we have always reason to be afraid of our own hearts, and so depend entirely on free grace, like a poor penitent condemned malefactor; else the Pharisee will soon lift up his head again. But he that is really convinced he is such a miserable lost sinner, and has no good in him by nature, pleading guilty in all things, and seeking every thing freely in CHRIST; is actually partaker of all the merits of CHRIST, and can look upon himself as entirely justified in him. Now, O LORD, grant that I may patiently know and cleanse myself more and more; and though I cannot effect it by my own power; yet my comfort is, that thou art good alone, and art willing and able to work in me all that is good.

Nature has all its glories lost,
When brought before thy throne;

| No flesh shall in thy presence boast,
But in the LORD alone.

8 DEC.

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TAKE *this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages,* EXOD. ii. 9.

As Moses was ordered to be saved by the most cruel enemy's daughter; so Satan himself, even when he meditates our destruction, must be a means of our life. See also MATT. xii. 48. *Who is my mother? &c.* ISAI. viii. 10. chap. ix. 6. O LORD JESUS, thou being also a child born unto me, and I willing to receive thee as my IMMANUEL, thou wilt be my shield and exceeding great reward; and defend me powerfully against all my enemies. O my dear Saviour, since thou art mine, all is mine, even thy Father, thy Spirit, and thy heavenly glory; all accidents, all enemies must work for my good, and be instruments and ministers of my salvation. O that I may never fear any thing, but thinking directly it is mine, may only make good use of every thing. Thus even the very worst would turn to my greatest blessing; and without it perhaps I should want as needful a thing, as a mill or a ship does when destitute of wind and water.

My soul, survey thy happiness,
If thou art found a child of grace,
How richly is the gospel stor'd!
What joy the promises afford!

All things are new; the gift of God;
And purchas'd with our Saviour's blood;

While the good Spirit shews us how
To use and to enjoy them too.

If peace and plenty crown my days,
They help me, LORD, to speak thy praise:
If bread of sorrows be my food,
Those sorrows work my real good.

9 DEC.

(343)

SPEAKING unto yourselves in psalms and hymns, EPH. v. 19. Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, COL. iii. 16.

IF we are obliged to promote the temporal good of our neighbour, how much more the spiritual, by edifying discourses. But how is it? the children of GOD, when somebody visits them, (says a certain divine) are sometimes troubled, and know not what discourse to enter upon: at last they begin, if not entirely in vain, yet perhaps unprofitable discourses, or at least they suffer others to do it, and are silent at it. I will tell you what I have done in such cases: I first prayed to GOD, saying; "O good GOD, here I receive a guest, and having nothing to set before and treat him with, I pray thee to give me the right bread for him;" which the LORD was pleased to hear in such a gracious manner, that I could soon enter into an edifying discourse. And thus we keep our conscience clean, though perhaps the lips are frozen up. Some foolish philosophers, to the great offence of others, mock at divine things, and even at prayer; as if natural reason and will was not corrupted, and highly wanted to be prayed for. But it is fulfilled with them, what St PAUL says, ROM. i. 22. What will become of these poor scoffers upon their dying bed, and at the day of judgment! O that they would take warning while it is time.

Now if some proper hour appear,
Let none be over-aw'd;

But let the scoffing sinners hear,
That we can speak for GOD.

TELL his disciples, and Peter (who was deeply fallen) especially, MARK xvi. 7. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous . . . for the whole world,* 1 JOHN ii. 1, 2. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees,* HEB. xi. 12.

HAST thou been slack, unfaithful, and fallen away, O poor soul, thou art not to make light of it: but why wilt thou continue in thy fallen condition any longer and complain? Get thee up, and ask pardon of CHRIST; he is ready to forgive and receive thee again, like Peter, “having received gifts for the rebellious.” Delay not to lay hold of thy ransom, which is greater than all the sins of the world, considering that it is paid even for this very sin, whose remission is purchased by it already. Therefore be not discouraged, much less suffer the temptation of drawing back to the world to prevail upon you. The LORD even now reaches forth his hands to thee anew by this very word; come, lift thyself up at it, and be careful for the time to come, to be so much more cautious, humble and gentle towards others; for a Christian’s feet will slide, but only into humility.

Salvation! O the joyful sound;
 ’Tis pleasure to our ears;
 A sov’rign balm for ev’ry wound,
 A cordial for my fears.

Bury’d in sorrow and in sin,
 At hell’s dark door I lay;
 But I arise, by grace divine,
 To see a heav’nly day.

BEHOLD we come unto thee, JER. iii. 22. (and) I will come unto you, JOHN xiv. 18. A lively representation of this happy meeting see LUKE xix. 4, 5, 6. *Zaccheus ran . . . and CHRIST said unto him, Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.*

O MY dear Saviour, since I come to thee, and thou to me, we shall certainly meet one another. Who will oppose and obstruct it? Devil and sin? O no! this wall of separation is pulled down. "CHRIST says, Come unto me, I am not an angry judge, but a loving Mediator between GOD and thy frightened conscience; keep to me, and fear not wrath. "Why therefore I sit here, that, believing in me to make intercession for thee with "GOD, no wrath nor disgrace can befall thee. Should wrath and punishment come "upon thee, it must first come upon me; which is quite impossible, since he is the "dear Son of GOD, in whom dwells all the fulness of grace, and the Father looking "upon him, his wrath must vanish away, and every thing in heaven and earth be "changed into smiles of love and grace," EPH. i. 6.—Dangers and conflicts being hot, GOD hastens with his assistance. At other times he tarries, and the work of our whole renovation goes on by little and little, that improving in the exercise of patience and faith, we may also bear with others, and learn not only to quicken our diligence, but also to wait for him.

In thine own ways, O GOD of love,
We wait the visits of thy grace;

Our souls' desire is to thy name,
And the remembrance of thy face.

MINE iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me, PSALM xxxviii. 4.

It is a sure sign that a man is awaked out of his sleep, when he discovers, and sees the error of his dream: in the drawing up of water out of a deep well, so long as the bucket is under water, we feel not the weight of it, but as soon as it cometh above water, it begins to hang heavy on the hand. When a man diveth under water, he feelth no weight of the water, though there may be many tuns of it over his head, whereas half a tub full of the same water, taken out of the river, and set upon the same man's head, would be very burdensome to him, and make him soon grow weary of it. In like manner, so long as a man is, as it were, over-head in sin, he is not sensible of the weight of sin, it is not troublesome to him; but when he begins once to come out of that state of sin wherein he lay and lived before, then beginneth sin to hang heavy upon him, and he groans under the weight thereof. So, so long as sin is in the will, the proper seat of sin, a man feeleth no weight of it, but like a fool, it is sport and pastime to him to do evil. It is therefore a good sign that sin is removed out of its seat, out of its chair of state, when it becomes ponderous and burdensome to us; and such a sense of sin may well be considered as an entrance into a state of grace.

13 DEC.

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RETURN, *ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings, JER. iii.*
22. See also LUKE XV. 20. *When he was yet a great way off—*

HEAR ye therefore the voice of thy loving Father and Shepherd, O thou backsliding child and lost sheep, crying earnestly, RETURN, RETURN. Do not run on in the broad way with the world any longer. Are you not tired yet of the husks of the world? Do you feel no troubles in your soul? Shall not these drive thee to GOD? Lo! thy Father and Shepherd seeks thee. He is gone forth to call and meet thee already. He will receive thee willingly and joyfully. Come only praying as the prodigal son, and he will freely forgive thee all, though thou hadst sinned ever so much. He is also able to heal and correct the most desperate corruptions of thy heart; he can deliver thee from the very jaws of hell and the devil. Nay, if thou even wast possessed with more than seven devils, he can still cast them out. Begin only to call upon him earnestly in prayer, and, poor and wretched as thou art, come to him as the physician of thy soul; for the physician and the sick, the rich and the poor, are the best suited to one another. He healeth ALL our diseases, and can make possible, what seems most impossible to thee.

Come, all ye vilest sinners, come,
He'll form your souls anew;

His gospel and his heart have room
For rebels, such as you.

14 DEC.

(348)

WATCH ye therefore and pray always, LUKE XXI. 36. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, HEB. xii. 1.

THE hearts of men are not like unto clocks, which only want to be wound up once a day; O no! the dulness and distraction is too great, and dangerous. We must lift them many times a day, yea, watch continually to lay aside every weight. Our going out and coming in, nay all things, even the very least, we must do with prayer, always strictly examining what is the will of the LORD; else, if they are done after our own will, they do not tend to the glory of GOD, and cannot be attended with his blessing. But if we earnestly strive against our own will in prayer, willingly suffering every hour what the LORD thinks proper to lay upon us, and will be ruled by his hints, and slight strokes of his rod, many heavy afflictions, scourges and whips, can be avoided; for the burdens which we bring upon ourselves by our own will and impatience, are always the heaviest. A Christian has daily his proper burden and affliction, like a clock, its weights, by which the flesh is kept under, so that the spirit can rise up. Therefore when any thing comes cross, he looks upon it as his weight for the day, to stir him up to the exercise of prayer, and meditation in the word of GOD. O LORD, grant that I may always bear thy easy yoke, and never be the cause of my own distress and dulness.

Wait on the LORD, ye trembling saints,
And keep your courage up;

He'll raise your spirit when it faints,
And far exceed your hope.

15 DEC.

(349)

GIVE an account of thy stewardship, LUKE XVI. 22.

O LORD! how have I wasted my time, goods and faculties! O pardon me for thine infinite mercy's sake; blot out my debt by thy blood; and grant, that keeping henceforth daily and hourly a good account, and acting more prudently, faithfully, and diligently, my reckoning may not be false at last. But preserve me also from all needless cares; since the care where to get something is not the steward's business, but only to husband every thing faithfully. "Teach me, O LORD, and give me wisdom and grace to govern my house, and manage all my affairs rightly. Be thou the principal governor and father of my family; I will be nothing but thy servant; direct me only in all things that I may not suffer or do any harm." He that does not expostulate with God, but, justifying him, accuses himself to be guilty in all things, even in his best performances, will be justified again by Him through the righteousness of his dear Son. And being thus adopted of God, he is ready and willing to be governed and directed by him in all things as a child.

That awful day will surely come,
Th' appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my Judge,
And pass the solemn test,

Thou lovely chief of all my joys,
Thou sov'reign of my heart!
How could I bear to hear thy voice.
Pronounce the sound, DEPART?

16 DEC.

(350)

EXAMINE yourselves, whether you be in the faith, 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

MANY would be converted and become believers, if they did not presumptuously pretend to it, thinking they were not heathens, but had faith already. For such as have actually faith, often doubt whether they have any or not; and those that are without, imagine they have enough. But faith is only wrought in the souls of those, who are deeply humbled by a thorough conviction of the greatness and heinousness of their sins; confessing themselves not only with their lips, but with a true sense of their hearts, to be the chief of sinners; and looking upon themselves as the most unworthy of all creatures. Without this repentance we do not enter through the right gate, and our faith is a false imagination. For faith is the greatest and most difficult thing, even to a child of God; it receives CHRIST into the heart, and overcomes the devil, world, and all sins; which is not easily done. Therefore, if the generality of people had true faith, nothing was easier than that: for, what can be easier than to conceive thoughts and imaginations of any thing? then there would be no need to pray for faith, to strive, and examine ourselves; consequently these words were superfluous in the Bible. For such a faith has every one, even the most wicked. But they deceive themselves, for faith is said to be the victory over the world. And if the first Christians had need to examine themselves, how much more have we? Therefore, the best and safest way is, to pray earnestly for that faith which has boldness, and triumphs even in death.

O LORD, thy grace and power display;
Let guilt and death no longer reign:

Save me in thine appointed way,
Nor let my humble faith be vain,

17 DEC.

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FOR thy name's sake leade me and guide me. Pull me out of the net, &c.

PSALM xxxi. 3—5. *When the ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee, NUMB. x 35.*

EVERY one having his own particular gift, has also his own particular enemies, who lay various nets and hinderances in his way. But as every body must clear the way for a king when he travels: much more so our enemies, when the King of kings guides us and goes before us. Grant only, O LORD, that all my goings and restings may be done at thy will, NUMB. iv. 17—23 Be gloriously pleased to go always before me, and to make room, that mine enemies may be scattered and fall into their own nets. For thou, who dwellest in heaven, laughest at all, even mine inward spiritual enemies; and art willing and able to confound the greatest craft and power even of the most inveterate and dangerous. And “since thou enlightenest my darkness, and art a buckler to all those that trust in thee; and not only teachest my hands to war, “but even fightest for me as the GOD of my covenant,” (PSALM xviii. 28—36.) I shall surely come off more than conqueror.

Great God, preserve my conscience clean;
Wash me from guilt, subdue my sin;
Thy love shall guard me from surprise.
Tho' threat'ning dangers round me rise.

My faith would seize some promise, LORD;
There's pow'r and safety in thy word;
Not a'l that earth and hell can say,
Shall tempt or drive my soul away.

— *AND Moses said unto them, This is the bread, which the LORD hath given you to eat, EXOD. xvi. 16.*

THIS manna was entirely different from the common manna, which is shook from the leaves of trees, and used only in medicine; this dropped down from the clouds, and was truly a miraculous production, as is evident from the following circumstances; that it fell but six days in the week; that it fell in such a prodigious quantity, as sustained almost three millions of souls;—that a double portion of it fell the day before the Sabbath, and none on that day, &c.

This manna is called “spiritual meat,” 1 COR. x. 3. because it was typical of spiritual blessings in heavenly things. CHRIST himself is the true manna, the bread of life, of which that was a figure, JOHN vi. 49—51. The word of God is the manna, by which our souls are nourished, MATT. iv. 4. The comforts of the Spirit are “hidden manna,” REV. ii. 17. These come down from heaven, as the manna did, are the support and comfort of the divine life in the soul, while we are in the wilderness of this world. The manna they gathered in the wilderness was not to be hoarded up, but eaten; so they that have received CHRIST, must by faith live upon him, and not receive his grace in vain; they that did eat manna in the wilderness hungered again; whereas they that feed on CHRIST by faith shall never hunger. “LORD, evermore give us this bread!”

19 DEC.

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WHAT wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom, ESTHER V. 3.

DOST thou want nothing, O poor soul! Hast thou nothing to ask? O yes! you say, a great deal. Well then, draw near to thy gracious King and Bridegroom without fear. Lo! he holds out his golden scepter to thee, saying, Ask, only ask, not only the half, but my whole kingdom shall be granted; nay, I will give myself unto thee. O dear soul, pray, and tell him every thing that is wanting, be it ever so great or ever so small. His loving-kindness will hear even the least petition; nay, he will pretend to be ignorant of what thou dost not tell him. But whatever is poured out before him, is actually addressed and lodged in its proper place, and does not lie upon thy heart any longer, but upon his heart, which cannot rest till you are relieved. And since you have experienced his assistance so often, in greater and lesser things; you may depend upon his being as willing and able now to help thee out of all troubles. We often imagined we were willing, and drawing near him, but he was unwilling, and refused our request: but it is not so, he rather draws us, and desires our relief more than we do; for it is he that would have even this willing mind.

Are these the happy persons here,
Who dwell the nearest to their GOD?
Has GOD invited sinners near?
And JESUS bought this grace with blood?

Go then, my soul, address the Son,
To lead thee near the Father's face;
Gaze on his glories yet unknown,
And taste the blessings of his grace.

A a

WHAT wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? LUKE xviii. 18.

O LORD, dost thou ask me also this question? O yes! Well then, I answer; That I may see how gracious thou art; that knowing thy love in thy light, I may love thee again. This is the sum and substance of all my prayer; because thou requirest it so seriously of me, 1 COR. xvi. 22. But thou dost not require it as of myself, well knowing that I can do nothing: but signifiest only what I am to ask of thee, and what thou art willing to give and to work. For, thou dost not require any thing, but what thou workest thyself; and workest every thing, what thou requirest. Therefore, faith and love being required by thee; I require the same from thee again. Grant, O grant them to me, that I may return them to thee again. And since nothing is pleasing to thee, but what is thy own gift; I trust that thou wilt certainly hear and fulfil this my request. However, as my salvation is not grounded on my own, but on thine and thy Father's love and counsel, to save me by free grace through thy merits; I go on, covered all over with grace and pardon. This is treasure enough, by which my heart can be well satisfied.

He that can shake the worlds he made,
Or with his word, or with his rod;
His goodness how amazing great!
And what a condescending God!

Our sorrows and our tears we pour
Into the bosom of our God;
He hears us in the mournful hour,
And helps us bear the heavy load.

*I*N returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, ISAII. XXX. 15. In your patience possess ye your souls, LUKE XXI. 9.

CHRISTIANS must suffer patiently. This is their armour, God fighting for and assisting them. But when we are unwilling to suffer, going about to make complaints every where, and to seek human comfort, or to rid ourselves, we neglect and lose the comfort and aid of the LORD; we are stirring up the wasp-nest of our unruly thoughts, and bring more trouble upon ourselves and others; nay, we are fighting against God, who thereby intends to cure our impatience, pride and anger. For the more we are peevish and wild, the more desperate is our disease; and consequently we have so much more need of such sharp but wholesome trials of afflictions, to mortify these wild passions of the flesh. Therefore we must not presume to murmur or complain, which will only make bad worse: For he that will avoid one trouble, perhaps runs into ten others. Sometimes it is possible and easy to rid ourselves, but the help is not so glorious and blessed, as if we had waited for the help of the LORD.

Sure I must bear, if I would reign;
Increase my courage LORD!
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

Must I be carry'd to the skies,
On flow'ry beds of ease;
While others suffer'd for the prize,
And sail'd through bloody seas?

22 DEC.

(356)

WHO SO loveth instruction, loves knowledge; but he that hates reproof, is brutish, PROV. xii. 1.

THEREFORE we should take and make the best of the reproofs of others, though they were not without blemishes; and not be like thorns and briars, pricking and hurting those that touch them. Nothing can be said so bad of us, which we have not the root of in our heart. And though we are convinced of and strive against our own weakness, yet it may not be so earnestly that we conquer. Therefore God comes to our assistance in a sharp reproof of others; for he knows how to use even the faults of others to our good. And if we receive every thing as from him alone, striving so much against this our frailty, that we may not be offensive to our neighbour any more, we certainly gain a great victory and blessing. But if we grow impatient, and make many excuses, being unwilling to put up any thing, we make evil worse, and neglect the amendment of ourselves and others. O LORD, make us better, and give us patience.

How should the sons of Adam's race
Be pure before their God?
If he contend in righteousness,
We fall beneath his rod,

I

To vindicate my words and thoughts
I'll make no more pretence;
Not one of all my thousand faults
Can bear a just defence,

23 DEC.

(357)

BE ye holy, for I am holy, 1 PETER i. 16.

HOLINESS is a plant of the LORD's own planting; its root is nourished by the waters of life, and the dew of grace lays continually on its branches; it is not to be found on nature's ground in its highest improvements; *Morality* saith it is not in me; it grows only in the garden of grace; there must be a union with CHRIST by faith, a new nature, and a new heart, for holiness to strike root in, before the fruits thereof can be produced in life and conversation. "Holiness, said a great writer, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; bringing an inexpressible purity, brightness, peaceableness, and ravishment to the soul: it makes the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers, all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm, and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true christian appeared like such a little white flower, as we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground; opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrant; standing peaceably and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about, and in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun. Holiness is an excellent thing, it puts a glory upon all other graces; it carries a graceful majesty along with it; beholders are astonished at it, opposers cannot but admire it." Reader, are you such a flower, such a plant of renown? then look forward with rapture to the paradise above, where holiness will bloom for ever.

FOR wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth, EXOD. xxxiii. 16.

READER, do you adopt the language of Moses, and request with him, that in all your removals God's presence may go with you? That you be not permitted to stir without this distinguishing testimony, that you are in the path of duty? Are you waiting upon the LORD, earnest to serve him in sincerity and truth; "not being conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind," and desirous to be numbered with his separate people? Then you may expect the divine blessing, and your way to be prosperous. It was a distinguishing privilege of the Israelites, that they were to dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the nations; and it is the privilege and duty of the spiritual Israeli, to be separate and distinct from the world; they are a separate people in the love of God; in their election in CHRIST; in the covenant of grace made with them in him; in effectual vocation; in their being seated with him at his right hand in the day of judgment; and in their being with him to all eternity. Nor are they reckoned among the nations, but as they are called out of them, and generally treated as the refuse and off-scouring of all things, they do not reckon themselves to be of the world, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. LORD, let my lot be among thy separate people, the righteous, both here and for evermore.

25 DEC.

(359)

AND thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins, MATT. i. 21.

SIN is the deadliest foe we have; it cast our first parents out of paradise; it defaced the image of God in man; it brought pain, sickness and death into the world, a spiritual death into the soul; it causes a distance from God, and a dislike to his holy ways; it gave Satan an interest in, and a power over mankind; it once drowned the world, and will destroy it at last; it exposes body and soul to the just judgment of a holy God, and will sink every unpardoned offender into everlasting perdition. How is this deadly foe to be conquered? How is this fretting leprosy of the soul to be cleansed? Reader, be careful in this matter, and seek after a remedy that will be lasting and efficacious. Duties, prayers, tears, sacrifices, morality, and partial reformations, avail nothing in this case; all below CHRIST JESUS, will prove physicians of no value. Jesus is the only Saviour; God the Father sent him into the world to save sinners; his name implies the same; he is "called JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins;" his blood is the only propitiation for sin; this sprinkled upon the heart by the Spirit, and apprehended by faith, removes the guilt and curse of sin; speaks pardon and peace: his grace breaks the power, and turns our love to it, into an utter hatred of it; thus is holiness secured in the heart and walk, as well as peace in the conscience. He will save from the very being of sin, after the conflict between flesh and spirit is over; his people are all that believe in him, and depend upon him for pardon, peace, and everlasting salvation. In that happy number, Reader, may thou and I be found; may we be enabled to look to him, to receive him as our LORD JESUS, able and willing to save to the very uttermost. And may we walk as the redeemed of the LORD, in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life. AMEN.

26 DEC.

(360)

POUR OUT your heart before GOD, PSALM lxii. 8.

WHAT a different view does this animated text give of *Praying*, opposed to the usual expression of SAYING *our Prayers*? Saying what our books, or our parents teach us; saying what we have been long used to say, perhaps of our own composing, in a formal and customary manner. To *POUR OUT* our heart, is similar to emptying a vessel of all its contents, so that nothing remains; and, O! what a pleasing, awful, important thing must this be; whatever is in my heart, my guilt or fears, my sins or sorrows; my cares and crosses, my wants, my dangers, my weaknesses, temptations, darkness and ignorance, my doubts and anxieties, respecting both body and soul, myself and others, the church and the world; every thought that arises relating either to past, present, or future, I have leave to empty myself of, to pour out by drops, or in a more copious stream, till not one burden remains; and this not by myself, or before men, for what help can I get from either? but before GOD, who is a prayer-hearing GOD, both able and willing to relieve, and who will not turn away from his self-emptying creatures, but will fill them with his consolations, which are neither few nor small. He can send a Hannah away no longer sad, can say, "Son, or daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," and send an instructor to an enquiring Cornelius to inform him what he must do. No wonder then that real prayer is so much unknown, or is such a cordial, when it is made before him, who is a refuge for us. Away then for ever with the prayer of the formalist, may I learn fervency of devotion from my heavenly Master, who in his agony prayed till drops of blood fell down; and in all my sorrows, and distresses, spiritual and temporal, in life and in death, like him may I be heard of my heavenly Father in the things that I fear. To a suffering JESUS, I look for pardon and cleansing; O let me be accepted in the Beloved, and purged daily from my defilements, and so become a vessel to honour, sanctified for the master's use for ever. Amen.

27 DEC.

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B*Y the grace of GOD I am what I am.—Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of GOD.—As new-born babes desire the sincere, milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 COR. XV. 10. 1 PET. i. 23. and chap. ii. 2.*

WHAT made the wonderful difference between Saul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian ? GRACE. What made him trample upon his former legal righteousness, and desirous to be found in the righteousness of CHRIST ? GRACE, illuminating grace. Wherein consists the difference between the mere moralist and the real christian ? there may be a moral deportment where there is no grace, no principle of saving divine faith ; there may be the fear of the LORD, taught by the precept of men, and not by the Spirit of GOD. One may attend the externals of religion ; may have a regard to outward decency ; may have a name to live while dead ; be high in profession, and at the same time a stranger to the power of godliness ; many things outwardly decent and praise-worthy may be done without a principle of grace in the heart, witness Paul before his conversion.

Have I this principle, called GRACE, in my soul ? Have I been born of the incorruptible seed ? Have I got the taste of a child of GOD ? Have I tasted that the LORD is gracious ? Then will I desire the sincere milk of the word : the babe loves the pure milk from the breast, I will love the milk of the pure word, and from these breasts of consolation will seek comfort and nourishment for my soul. Redeeming love shall be my delightful theme ; will sweeten every thing in the service of JESUS, will constrain to extensive usefulness in my sphere of life ; the grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS will enlarge my views, keep me humble in heart, and give the praise where alone it is due. Through the sincere milk of the word may I grow daily, and be nourished up to eternal life. Amen.

28 DEC.

(362)

WE must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, 2 COR. V. 10.

AND are there scoffers, who madly walk after their own lusts, and question the coming of the LORD? The hour hastens, when infidelity shall doubt no more; "The LORD himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of GOD." How will sinners fade away, and be afraid in their close places, when, visible to all, the Judge shall appear on his great white throne, and from his face the earth and the heaven flee away? Before him shall stand the whole race of man, small and great, and by the testimony of GOD, and their own consciences, it shall be fully proved, and openly declared what they have been, and what they have done.—Then sentence, most righteous; irrevocable, and big with eternity, shall be pronounced.—On the wicked everlasting punishment; on the righteous life everlasting! Meditate terror, you obstinate transgressors, behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; they also, which pierced him, and all the wicked kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. "Now, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" now embrace him, as your offered, your all-sufficient Saviour; so shall you be for ever delivered from him as your angry Judge. If this you neglect, how shall you abide the day of his coming in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all them that know not GOD, and who obey not the gospel? Lift up thy head, my soul, none else is judge, but CHRIST; will he, who bore my sins, plead against me in judgment? No, but he will put strength in me; I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that salvation of my soul, which I have committed to him against that day.

29 DEC.

(363)

WE being many are one body in CHRIST, and every one members one of another, ROM. xii. 5.

O THE blessed communion of saints! one member has the benefit of all the other members gifts, prayers and ministrations. One prays for all, and all pray for one. What one has, the other enjoys also. It may be truly said of them, ALL IS YOURS. There is no envy, no haughtiness, no strife, or harm; for why should I envy that which is my own? why should I despise that which serves for my necessary assistance? and why should I strive against, and hurt him, whose hurt is my own? Is there any strife or collision between the members of our natural body? By no means; they all serve, help and assist one another; and if one be injured and suffers, all the rest, as it were, run to its relief, and are neither tired or angry, if the healing does not follow immediately. O LORD, unite us all into such a communion and general sympathy, and stop all open and subtil divisions amongst our members, who pretend to something extraordinary, and to be wise above the rest. Restrain that mean sectarian and self-conceited spirit of the world, granting true humility to all; then we shall live in a solid union and uninterrupted harmony.

O glorious portion of the saints!
Let love suppress our sore complaints,

And tune our hearts and tongues to sing,
"All glory to our sov'reign King."

FORASMUCH as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of CHRIST, ministered by us, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart, 2 COR. iii. 3.

THE image is beautiful and instructing,—“The epistle of CHRIST written (not in “tables of stone)” not on a stony elaborate heart, but on a heart of flesh; a heart softened by grace, and made susceptible of good impressions:—The heart, the seat of vital religion. So runs the gracious promise, JER. xxxi. 33.

The word read and preached is ineffectual, without the operation of the Spirit of God. By the Spirit christians are cast into the gospel mold; thereby get evangelical, spiritual, heavenly dispositions; their resemblance to CHRIST is gradually increased; they have the witness in themselves; have the comfortable experience that they are CHRIST’S, when they can read his image on their hearts.—They are manifestly declared to others, that they are the epistle of CHRIST, by their good conversation and conduct in the world, confessing him before men, and speaking forth his praise. “Holiness to the Lord” is inscribed on this epistle. They also resemble one another in mutual love, and in love to all that bear their master’s image. They are the epistle of CHRIST, as sealed by his Spirit to the day of redemption; are enabled to shew forth the truth, reality and power of religion in times of affliction, and often at a dying hour.

Am I the epistle of CHRIST? Do I read the epistles of CHRIST in my Bible? Do I see the finger of God in this divine book? Do I read the mind of God there? O blessed discovery! What condescending grace! The great God by his Spirit to dictate epistles so loving and kind! The great God, whom I have offended, to send me a pardon, not only in his word, but by his Son also! Do I read the word of reconciliation in his gospel? Do these glad tidings of great joy revive my drooping spirits? I would read this epistle from heaven over and over again. O how much do I find in it, while the Lord the Spirit opens the understanding to understand the scriptures!

31 DEC.

(365)

ALLELUIA, REV. XIX. I.

THOU didst begin the year, O my soul, with an *HOSANNA*, imploring the Lord's blessing, canst thou now conclude it with an *ALLELUIA*? Surely thou canst celebrate the praise of a gracious and loving God? Take a review of the year past; hast thou not had many mercies? Have not the eyes of the LORD been upon thee for good from the beginning of the year to the ending thereof? Hath he not conducted thee through many seen and many more unseen dangers? Canst thou not with truth as well as gratitude set up thine Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto the LORD hath helped me," 1 SAM. vii. 12. If thou hast not been so fruitful in good works as might have been expected, is thy LORD to blame, or thyself? Whatever good has been done in thee or by thee, surely belongs to the favour of God; and whatever has caused shame or humiliation, is no where chargeable but upon thyself. "Praise the LORD then, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name; praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and year after year crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness;" and will at last crown thee with everlasting glory. Thou wilt soon, O my soul, enter upon another year; let dear-bought experience teach thee to avoid all occasions of evil, and keep thee close to thy God. If thou livest to see another day, set out afresh, and remember to offer thy daily sacrifice of obedience as well as of praise to thy gracious God. Let every revolving day and year remind thee of a dissolution of thy clay-tenement, and that happy period when thou shalt sing uninterrupted Alleluias before the throne of God and the LAMB for ever and ever.

This God is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable friend;
Whose love is as great as his power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last;
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home,
We'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come,

Additional Page for the *Leap-Year*, FEB. 29.

— **B**EHOLD these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? — **L**ORD, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down, LUKE xiii. 7—9.

THOU fruitless fig-tree, thou barren professor, dost thou hear this, and not tremble? God is come seeking fruit; will thy bare profession, thy knowledge of the principles of religion, satisfy the great GOD? Will the notions of truth in thy head, thy talking and disputing, thy hearing the word preached, thy commending, or censoring sermons and preachers, just as thou art in the mood, will this serve thy turn? and wilt thou thus endeavour to ward off the heart-searching GOD? Know thou, GOD is come to seek for fruit, good fruit, and precious from thee; not the fruit of good words only, but the fruit of good works; not the fruit of talking well, but of walking well, the fruits of holiness in life and conversation: fruit short of this GOD will not regard. If thy conscience is awakened, look to thy merciful high priest, consider well his intercession for such a barren soul as thou art, "LORD, let it alone," &c. Father let this man live one year longer; O turn away from this thine anger; I will yet see what may be done; I will take other methods; I will try what corrections may do, perhaps the rod may work more upon him than my word has hitherto done, and may tend to make his barren heart fruitful; I will also stir up my servants to awaken him by a more sharp and searching manner; and if these new efforts be blessed to him, all shall yet be well, thy grace magnified, and his soul saved; if not, then thou shalt cut him down.

If under means of grace
No fruits of grace appear,
It is a dreadful case;

Tho' GOD may long forbear;
At length he'll strike the threat'ned blow,
And lay the barren fig-tree low.

A PRAYER for Christian Graces.

HOLY, holy LORD GOD Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come; who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou art the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hast immortality; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see. Thou art a God at hand, and a God afar off; none can hide himself in secret places where thou canst not see him, for thou fillest heaven and earth; thine eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good: thou searchest the heart, and triest the reins, even the thoughts and intents of the heart are naked and open before thee.

I know, O LORD, that thou canst do every thing; power belongs to thee, and with thee nothing is impossible; what
 thou

thou hast promised thou art able also to perform. Thou art good and doest good ; good to all, and thy tender mercy is over all thy works ; O that thou wouldst cause thy goodness to pass before me : that I may taste and see that the LORD is good, and have his loving-kindness always before mine eyes.

O my GOD, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face before thee, my GOD ; for my iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up unto the heavens : behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth, and put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope, crying out, Unclean, unclean.
 “ If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me ;
 “ If I say, I am perfect ; that also shall prove me perverse ; for if
 “ thou contend with me, I am not able to answer thee one
 “ in a thousand ; behold I was shapen in wickedness, and
 “ in sin did my mother conceive me ; for who can bring

“ a clean thing out of an unclean ? ” My understanding being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in me, because of the blindness of my heart.

I have within me a carnal mind, which is enmity against God ; my neck has been as an iron sinew, and I have made my heart as an adamant ; I have refused to hearken, have pulled away the shoulder, and have stopped my ears, like the deaf adder : O how I have hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof ? I have forgotten God, and lived as without God in the world. My heart hath walked after vanity and become vain. I have set my affections on things beneath, have followed after lying vanities, and forsaken my own mercies. I have forsaken the living waters, for cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water : there is in me a bent to backslide from the living God ; my heart is deceitful above all things, and del-

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perately

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perately

perately wicked, it starts aside like a broken bow.
 “ The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint ; from
 “ the sole of the feet, even to the head, there is no sound-
 “ ness in me, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying
 “ sores.”

LORD, I come to thee as the poor publican, and I
 pray his prayer, “ God be merciful unto me a sinner ;”
 the God of infinite mercy be merciful to me. O wash
 me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from
 my sin ; for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin
 is ever before me. O purge me with hyssop, and I shall
 be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ;
 hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine ini-
 quities. Let me be justified freely by thy grace, through
 the redemption of Jesus : Take away all mine iniquity,
 and receive me graciously ; heal my backslidings, and love
 3 me

me freely ; and let thy anger be turned away from me, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I will say unto God, do not condemn me, but deliver me from going down into the pit, for thou hast found a ransom. I have sinned, Father, against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; but I have an Advocate with Thee, JESUS CHRIST the righteous, and he is the propitiation for my sin. LORD remember the true David, and all his troubles ; remember all his offerings, and accept his burnt-sacrifice ; and turn not away the face of thine Anointed, who by his own blood is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for men. Remember the covenant in his blood, and be merciful to mine unrighteousness, and my sins and my iniquities remember no more.

Let me be justified by faith, and have peace with God through JESUS CHRIST, and through him let me have access to that grace wherein believers stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. O make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which sin has broken may rejoice. Let the blood of CHRIST speak better things than that of Abel; let it speak pardon and peace to my soul; let it purge my conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Let thy Spirit witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, and a joint-heir with CHRIST; say to my soul, that thou art my salvation.

LORD, give me a wise and understanding heart; that which I know not, teach thou me; let the Spirit of truth guide me into all truth, and make me to understand wherein I have erred. Make thy way plain before my face, because of mine observers; and by the teaching of thy
Word

Word and Spirit make me wise unto salvation. Unto me, LORD, let it be given to believe, for the faith by which I am saved is not of myself, it is the gift of God : LORD increase my faith, and perfect what is lacking in it, that I may be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Let every word of thine profit me, being mixed with faith ; and enable me to look above the things that are seen, which are temporal, to the things that are unseen, which are eternal ; let my heart be purified by faith, and enable me by faith to overcome the world, to resist the adversary, and to live continually upon Jesus, drawing out of his fulness grace for grace.

Unite my heart to fear thy name, that I may keep thy commandments : O put thy fear into my heart, that I may never depart from thee ; let me be in the fear of the LORD all the day long. Deliver me from all slavish

fear that hath torment, and give me a filial fear, that I may never wilfully offend against thee more.

Give me grace, I beseech thee, to love thee, the LORD my God, with all my heart, and soul, and mind; and strength, to delight myself always in thee, and therein shall I have the desire of my heart. O circumcise my heart to love thee, that I may live; O may the love of God be shed abroad in my heart by the holy Ghost. O that JESUS may be very precious to me, as he is to all that believe; that he may be in my account the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely; and though I have not seen him, yet may I love him, and by believing in him may rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Let the love of CHRIST to me constrain me to live, not to myself, but to him that died for me, and rose again.

LORD,

LORD, put upon me that charity which is the bond of perfectness, that I may keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and may live in love and peace; that the GOD of love and peace may be with me. Give me to love my neighbour as myself, with that love which is the fulfilling of the law; to love him with a pure heart fervently. Give me, O LORD, the love of the brethren; and enable me to be kindly affectioned towards them in brotherly love, that I may know I am passed from death unto life, and all may know that I am thy disciple. LORD, make me able to love mine enemies; to bless them that curse me; and to pray for them that despitefully use me; forbearing them and forgiving them, as, I trust, thou for CHRIST's sake hast forgiven me.

LORD, give me grace to deny myself, to take up my cross daily, and to follow CHRIST; to keep under the

body, and to bring it into subjection; let me learn of CHRIST to be meek and lowly in heart, that I may find rest to my soul; hide pride from me, and clothe me with humility; and put upon me the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in thy sight is of great price: let anger never rest in my bosom, nor the sun go down upon my wrath, but enable me to shew all meekness towards all men: let me have bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering; that being merciful, as my Father which is in heaven is merciful, I may be perfect as he is perfect.

LORD, teach me in every state to be content; let my conversation be without covetousness; may I always be content with such things as I have; still saying, the will of the LORD be done. LORD, give me grace to weep as though I wept not, and to rejoice as though I rejoiced

rejoiced not, and to buy as though I possessed not, and to use this world as not abusing it; because the time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away. May the very God of peace sanctify me wholly; and I pray God my whole spirit, and soul and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. Let goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, be thou with me, that I may fear no evil; let thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Redeem my soul from the power of the grave, and receive me; guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory, through JESUS CHRIST my blessed Lord and Saviour; to whom, with Thee and the holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A PRAYER

A PRAYER for the Grace of PERSEVERANCE.

ETERNAL GOD, with whom is everlasting strength, thou art able to keep us from falling, and to perform the good work begun in us, till the day of JESUS CHRIST. But, LORD, thou knowest how weak and changeable I am, how wavering, and bent to backsliding; how apt to decline and fall off, after I have been set up, and put in a good hopeful way heaven-ward; and in what danger still to undo myself, after all the great things thou hast done for me. O LORD of love, have pity on my infirmities, and strengthen me in my weakness. Preserve me, thou blessed Guardian of thy people, who keepest the feet of thy saints; O preserve me from the danger of apostacy, and falling away from any good beginnings,

beginnings, to which thy grace has ever wrought me: And put thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee. Make me so firmly thine, that nothing which befalls me in the world, may ever part betwixt thee and my soul; and make me so resolute for thy service, that nothing which any can say or do, may interrupt me in, or take me off from that way of life which is above to the wise, to depart from hell beneath. O let me not be of the number of those that draw back to perdition; but of their happy number, who do believe to the saving of the soul.

O LORD GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand; go on, I pray thee, to work for the glory of thy name, and to perfect that which concerns me. Thou hast been my help, leave me not, nor forsake me, O God of my salvation; but hold
 ,thou

thou me up, and I shall be safe ; and I will have respect
 to thy statutes continually. Establish, O LORD, strengthen,
 settle me ; and leave me no will or power to resist the
 gracious designs and methods of thy love and mercy, for
 the healing and saving of my soul. And as I, by my
 frailty, do still renew my sins, gracious LORD, through
 thy mercy, renew me to repentance ; and though I fall,
 let me not utterly be cast down, but uphold me by thy
 almighty hand ; preserve me to thy heavenly kingdom,
 and keep me by thy power, through faith to salvation.
 O make me so faithful unto death, that thou mayest give
 me the crown of life ; so to endure to the end, that I
 may be saved ; that in the end of my life I may receive
 the glorious consummation of all my hopes, that blessed
 end of my faith, the eternal salvation of my soul,
 through

through JESUS CHRIST, my dear LORD and Saviour. *Amen.*

A PRAYER for a CHILD.

GLORY be to thee, O LORD, in whom I live, and move, and have my being; who hast preserved me ever since I was born.

I humbly worship thee, O LORD, my heavenly Father, through JESUS CHRIST my Redeemer; O give me thy grace, that I may faithfully serve thee all the days of my life: Wash me from the guilt of my sins in the fountain of CHRIST's precious blood; save me daily by thy grace from the practice of sin; let thy good Spirit restrain, and cleanse the corruption of my nature; help me to remember thee, my Creator, in the days of my youth; preserve

preserve me from those errors and follies, to which the frailty of my age does most expose me, and keep me innocent from every great offence; deliver me from lying and vanity, from picking and stealing, from swearing and sabbath-breaking, and from the temptations of evil company.

Incline my heart to all that is good, that I may be modest and humble, true and just, meek and kind, temperate and diligent, respectful and obedient to all my superiors; that I may fear and love thee above all, and my neighbour as myself. Let thy good providence defend me from all evil night and day; let the grace of thy holy Spirit continually prevent and assist me; bless me in my learning, and help me daily to increase in knowledge, and wisdom, and in all virtues; instruct me, O LORD, more and more in the truths of thy holy word,
and

